

# Endangered Archives Programme British Library, UK

**A Report on the Pilot Project Entitled**

**“Private Records of Some Leading Business Families of Early Colonial  
Bengal”  
(EAP 906)**

**By**

**EAP: 906 Research Team**

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### **Acknowledgement**

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We would like to thank all the members of the families we surveyed during the tenure of this project.

Special thanks to the members of Endangered Archives Programme (EAP) for supporting this project which provided us with an excellent opportunity to carry out this challenging survey.

We would like to convey our heartfelt thanks to the authorities of Centre for Studies in Social Sciences (Kolkata), the archival partner of this project for their invaluable guidance and cooperation. Special thanks to Mr. Abhijit Bhattacharya and his team members of Centre's Urban History Documentation Archive.

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Finally, I am thankful to my college authority for providing all sorts of support for successful completion of the project.

### **Scope**

The idea of this Pilot Project was conceived to explore the private records of the leading business families of early colonial Bengal. It was a very challenging project as the tradition of record keeping at the family level is not very fair in Bengal. The recurrent fragmentation of family unit also disrupted the process of record keeping. Moreover, the humid climate of Bengal is unfavourable for preserving old records. When we started the project we were discouraged by many people including the members of the selected families. Initially they

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were not very much willing to share their private records with us. Some kind of suspicion was there regarding our intention as so many legal disputes are still running among the family members. We have to face some questions like 'who have sent you to collect our family records?' It is quit natural to the present members of those business families as their ancestors had left for them a huge immovable property and some of them still fight with each other for control of those properties. So it was very tough to earn the confidence of those families whom we surveyed.

We set a target of surveying the following twenty five business families of Bengal.

- |    | Name  |
|----|---|
| 1  | Akrur Dutta's Family                                  |
| 2  | Biswanath Motilal's Family of<br>Bowbazar             |
| 3  | Digambar Mitra's Family of<br>Shyampur                |
| 4  | Gakul Ghosal's Family                                 |
| 5  | Gakul Mitra's Family                                  |
| 6  | Ganga Gobinda Singh's Family<br>of Kandi and Paikpara |
| 7  | Motilal Seal's Family of<br>Colootola                 |
| 8  | Datta Family of Hatkhola                              |
| 9  | Prankrishna Law's family of<br>Thanthania             |
| 10 | Rajendra Mallik's Family                              |
| 11 | Ram Gopal Ghosh's Family                              |
| 12 | Ram Gopal Saha's Family                               |
| 13 | Ramdulal De Sarkar's Family                           |
| 14 | B.K.Pal's Family                                      |
| 15 | Ramlochan Ghosh's Family                              |
| 16 | Pal Chaudhuri Family of<br>Ranaghat                   |
| 17 | Krishnakanta Nandis Family of<br>Cossimbazar          |
| 18 | Jadulal Mullick's Family of<br>Pathurighata           |
| 19 | Raja Nabakrishna Deb's Family                         |

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- of Shobhabazar
- 20 Mitra family of Darjipara
- 21 Sanyal family of Natun Bazar
- 22 Roy family of Cossimbazar
- 23 (Basu) Mallik family of  
Pataldanga
- 24 Sarkar family of Surul, Bolpur
- 25 Gobindaprasad Pandit and  
Malia Family of Searsol

We visited all these families, set up contact with the present members and ultimately succeeded to convince thirteen families out of twenty families to open up their family records. Some families have genuinely lost their records; some deliberately avoided us and showed little interest in participating in the project. We are convinced that some of these families have old records kept in their iron chests but they will rather let them turn into dust than make them public. It is surprising that they still enjoy the property of their ancestors but not at all willing to preserve the legacy of their family founders. We met one old gentleman of a very reputed business family, a veteran historian having a PhD degree and writer of several books on his family history who also refused to collaborate with this project. Later we came to know from reliable sources that he had sold out the estate records of his family to a paper recycling agent few years back. This is a kind of mentality still prevalent among a section of the old families of Bengal.

### Outcome

In spite of all odds, we succeeded in convincing thirteen business families of Bengal who came forward to make their private records public for the sake of academic research on the field as well as expressed their willingness to digitize the records in future for long term preservation of their family records. The records we have explored are primarily belonged to the category of legal documents, advertisements, catalogues, seals, letterheads, letters, family photographs, family trees, manuscripts of family history, *punthis* (manuscripts) and printed books.

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The present report will present the detailed survey of the following thirteen business families of Bengal along with a brief family history and a list of private records available at the custody of these families which could be digitized in future.

[Deb Family of Shobhabazar](#)

[Mitra Family of Madanmohantala](#)

[Ghosh family of Pathuriaghata](#)

[Ray Family of Cossimbazar](#)

[Dutta Family of Hatkhola](#)

[Law Family of Thanthania](#)

[Motilal Family of Bowbazar](#)

[Seal Family of Colootola](#)

[Mitra Family of Shyampukur](#)

[B.K.Paul and Family](#)

[Daw Family of Jorasanko](#)

[Daw Family of Jorasanko](#)

[Uprndrakishore Ray \(Chowdhury\) and Family](#)

[List of Private Records](#)

### Deb Family of Shobhabazar

Raja Nabakrishna Deb, the founder of the Shobhabazar family, was closely associated with the administration of Clive and Verelst. His father Ramcharan Deb used to work as an official under the then Bengal ruler, Murshidkuli Khan. He was appointed as a collector and a salt agent of the areas of Hijli, Tamluk, Mahishadal and other parts of Bengal. Later on, he became the *Dewan* of Cuttack. After his death, his wife moved to Arpuli from Karnasubarnapur,

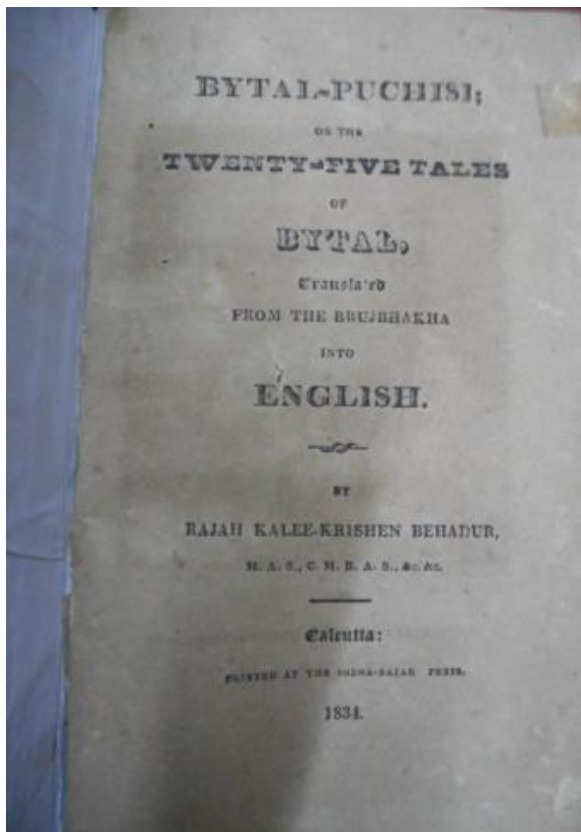
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Murshidabad, and then settled down at Sutanuti Shobhabazar. Nabakrishna Deb, the youngest son of Ramcharan was well read in Arabic and Persian and later on he mastered in English, the official language of communication during the colonial period. He started his career as a Persian teacher to Warren Hastings as early as 1750 when Hastings first landed in Calcutta. By 1756 he became the Persian clerk or *Munshi* to the Company. During the crucial days of 1756-57, he rendered useful service to the East India Company as interpreter. Gradually, Nabakrishna established well found rapport with the Company officials like Hastings, Clive and others. After the Battle of Plassey in 1757, he quietly rose to prominence and got a share in the 'loot of Plassey'. In 1767 he was appointed Political Banyan to the Company. Clive conferred upon him the title of 'Maharaja' in 1766. He emerged as the most influential Indian not only during the time of Clive but also in the following years under Clive's successor Verelst. By utilising his growing influence, Nabakrishna acquired huge property in Calcutta. Revenue records revealed Nabakrishna in the role of operator in salt business as well as in tax collection of the rich Bengal District of Burdwan. His success as a fortune maker was a phenomenon of the changing times.

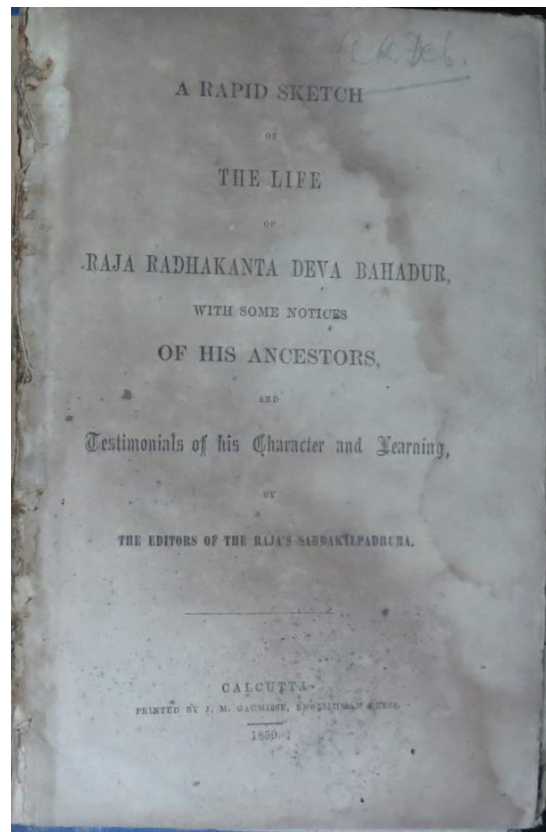
Raja Nabakrishna Deb adopted his elder brother, Ramsundar's son, Gopimohan Deb in 1770. At that time, he had no issues of his own. But in 1782, his wife gave birth to a son, Rajakrishna Deb. Both Gopimohan and Rajkrishna were influential people among the '*babus*' of 19<sup>th</sup> C Bengal. They were well read, patrons of different art forms and specially known for their philanthropic activities. Gopimohan Deb's son Radhakanta Deb was a renowned educationist and social activist. He was the editor of Sanskrit encyclopaedia, *Shabdakalpadroom* in eight volumes, the first of which appeared in 1822 and the last in 1856. He was the first Knight Commander of the most exalted order from India. This family is also renowned for hosting dance musical performances during the Durga Puja festival.

Nowadays the family members are branched out in several professions. But till today, a larger share of their income comes from the estates scattered in Calcutta and its suburbs. The continued tradition of estate management is still visible among the present generation.

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EAP 906:Bytal Puchisi (1834)



EAP 906: *A Rapid Sketches on The Life of Raja Radhakanta Deva Bahadur* (1859)

The EAP research team visited the Sobhabazar Rajbari several times and meet the family members and identified some important documents under the custody of Mr. Alok Krishna Deb, the senior most member of the Deb family. Of these documents there are some handwritten copies of old legal documents like equity suits, wills and partition suits of early 19<sup>th</sup> century and a typed copy of the Grant of The Tallookdarry by the East India Company to Rajah Nobkissen, the founder father of the family on 28.4.1778. The original documents are preserved at Kolkata High Court. We have found two books, one written by Raja Kalee Krishen Bahadur entitled *Bytal Puchisi* or (The Twenty Five Tales of Bytal) published in 1834 and the other one is a biographical sketch of Raja Radhakanta Dev entitled *A Rapid Sketches on The Life of Raja Radhakanta Deva Bahadur* (1859). Other than these documents there are some old mementos at the disposal of the family.

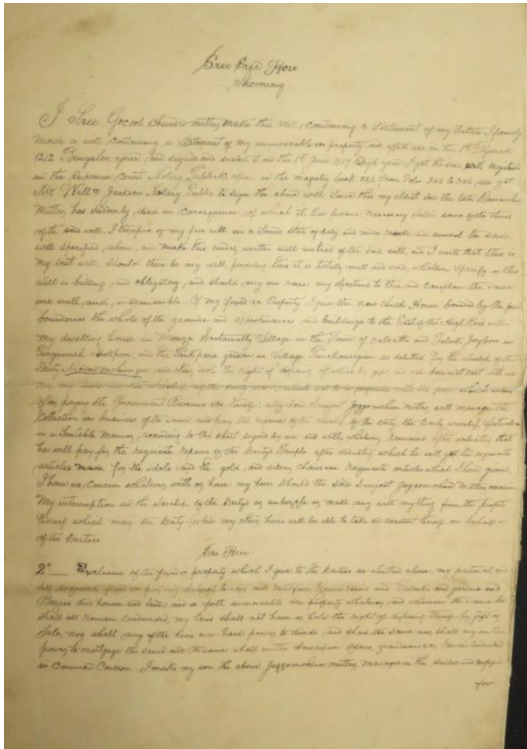
## **Mitra Family of Madanmohantala**

The Mitra family, founded by Gokul Chandra Mitra, was one of the leading business families of 18<sup>th</sup> century Bengal. Gakul Chandra Mitra fled to Calcutta from Bally with his father, Sitaram Mitra due to recurrent Maratha raids. He engaged himself into the thriving salt trade and shortly became a very successful businessman. He amassed huge wealth from the salt trade and emerged as one of the leading wealthy businessmen of his time. He was blessed with having the Madanmohan idol from the Raja of Bishnupur, Chaitanya Singh who borrowed a huge sum of money from him and mortgaged the Madanmohan idol to him. His residence soon came to be known as Madanmohantala due to the presence of the revered idol. His huge earning from the thriving salt trade and the presence of Madanmohan idol at his palace gave him a huge social prestige. Along with Raja Nabakrishna Deb of Sovabazar he petitioned to Lord Clive to get *ijara* of Calcutta, its suburbs and 24 Parganas in return of a revenue of Rs 13,00,000/- per annum. But Clive refused to grant them the 'ijara' due to the fear that they would exploit the subjects of the Company with their money and man power as both of them were very influential people of Kolkata. However, luck favoured Gakul Mitra as he won a lottery and got the entire land of Chandni Chowk. It is said that after he received the 'Madanmohan' idol his luck kept shining on to become one of the richest men of Calcutta.

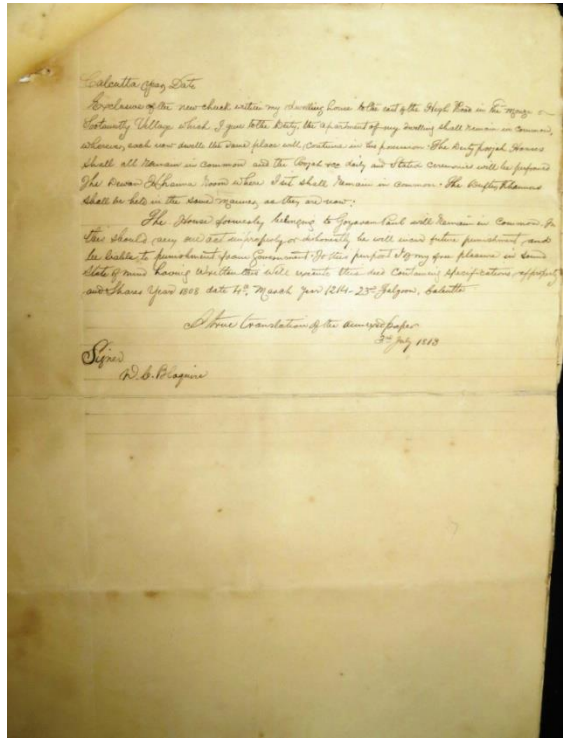
Gakul Chandra Mitra was also a very socially active person. He was engaged in Durga Puja, Ras Utsav, etc. He died in 1808. Along with his death there was a slow decay in the momentum of the salt business and his successors failed to carry out the business tradition set up by Gakul Chandra Mitra. Presently, the members of the Mitra family are not engaged in any form of business as such. Some of them are engaged in government services, advocacy, etc.



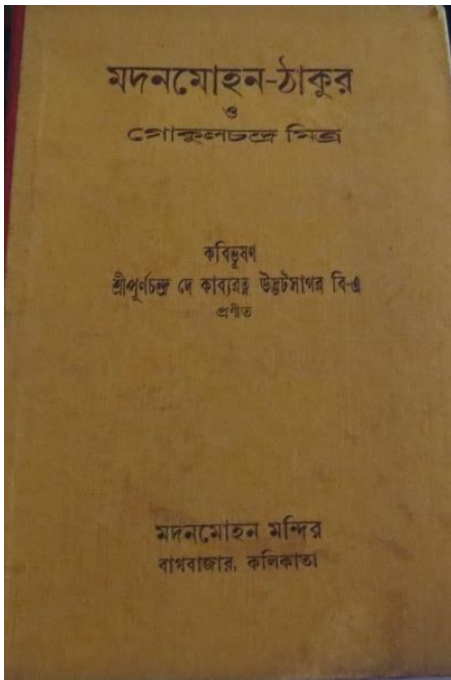
# Report of EAP 906



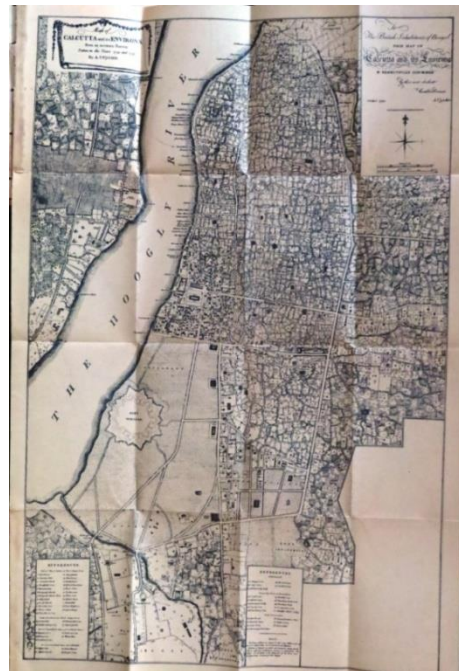
EAP 906: Will of Gakul Chandra Mitra, 1.6.1807 (first page)



EAP 906: Will of Gakul Chandra Mitra, 1.6.1807 (last page)



EAP 906: Madammohan Thakur O Gokul Chandra Mitra



EAP 906: Aron Upjojn's Map of Calcutta

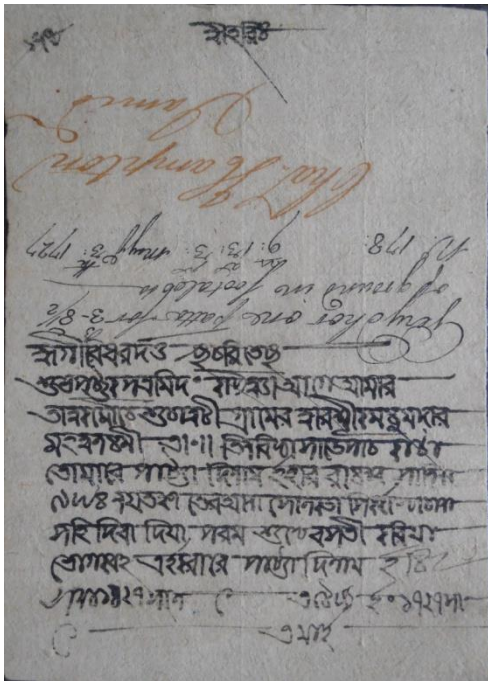
We have explored some important documents from this family. The most important one was the Will of Gakul Chandra Mitra which is one of the earliest

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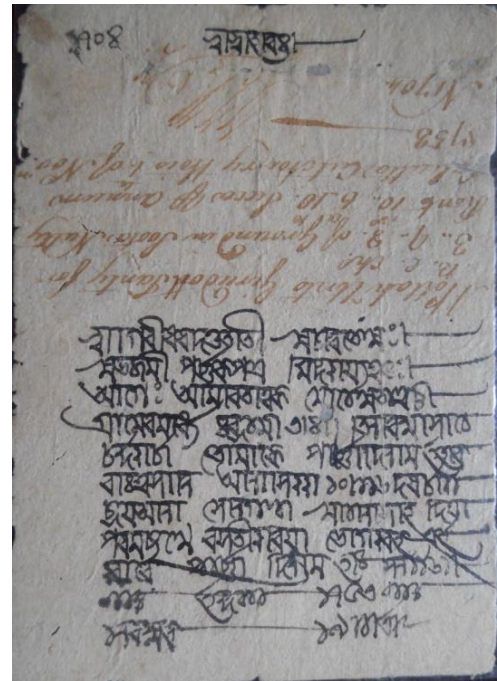
wills of colonial Bengal. Another one is the Aron Upjojn's *Map of Calcutta and its Environs from an accurate survey taken in the years 1792 and 1793*, one of the earliest maps of Calcutta. The importance of this map lies in the fact that it illustrates in details for the first time the build up area of the city as well as its immediate environs. We have also indentified a family history book written in 1937 by Sri Purnachandra Dey entitled *Madanmohan-Thakur O Gakulchandra Mitra (Lord Madanmohan and Gakulchandra Mitra )*.The book contains the detailed survey of the history of Mitra family.

### Ghosh family of Pathuriaghata

Ramlochan Ghosh was the fortune maker of the Ghosh family of Pathuriaghata, Kolkata. He emerged as a very successful businessman in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Subsequently he became the Sirkar of Lady Hastings and also a favourite of Warren Hastings, and generally called as his *Dewan*. He amassed huge wealth through his active participation in East India Company's official and private trade. He was appointed as the supervisor of the storehouse of the Company's exportable goods. He employed Kanto Chandra Nandy in the office of confidential secretary. Ramlochan Ghosh and his elder brother, Ramprasad at that time were very influential bankers. Ramlochan was very influential among the members of the Board of Directors at that time. He used to possess the official stamp of the Company. Ramlochan had three sons, Shivnarayan, Devnarayan and Anandanarayan. All of them turned into very influential zamindars in Calcutta. Ramlochan's eldest son, Shivnarayan and his family moved to 1, Jorabagan street in north Kolkata. He had three sons, Kaliprasanna, Guruprasanna and Durgaprasanna. Guruprasanna is famous for his mammoth donation to the University of Calcutta. Ramlochan's middle son, Devnarayan's son Khelat Chandra Ghosh moved to 47, Pathuriaghata Street. Khelat Ghosh was a very successful business entrepreneur who traded with the Company on a large scale and became very much influential within the Company circle. Later on, he was awarded with the post of Honorary Magistrate and Justice of Peace of Calcutta.



EAP 906: Document of Patta, 1727



EAP 906: Document of Patta, 1753

Anandanarayan had three sons, Girindra Chandra, Nagendra Chandra and Munindra Chandra. They along with Ramlochan's elder brother, Ramprasad's family continued to reside in 46, Pathuriaghata Street's palatial house. *Dewan* Ramprasad had two sons, Rajballav and Ramchandra. Ramachandra's two descendants, Kailashchandra and Harimohan were famous musicians as well. The members of the Ghosh family of Pathuriaghata were famous for their love and patronage for music. It was in the hall of the Ghosh family of Pathuriaghata that the All Bengal Music Conference was founded in 1937.

We have explored seven handwritten *Pattas* (deed of land ownership) written in old Bengali scripts; the earliest one belonged to 1727 and others were created between 1753 and 1799. We also identified a descriptive printed family tree in two parts at their house.

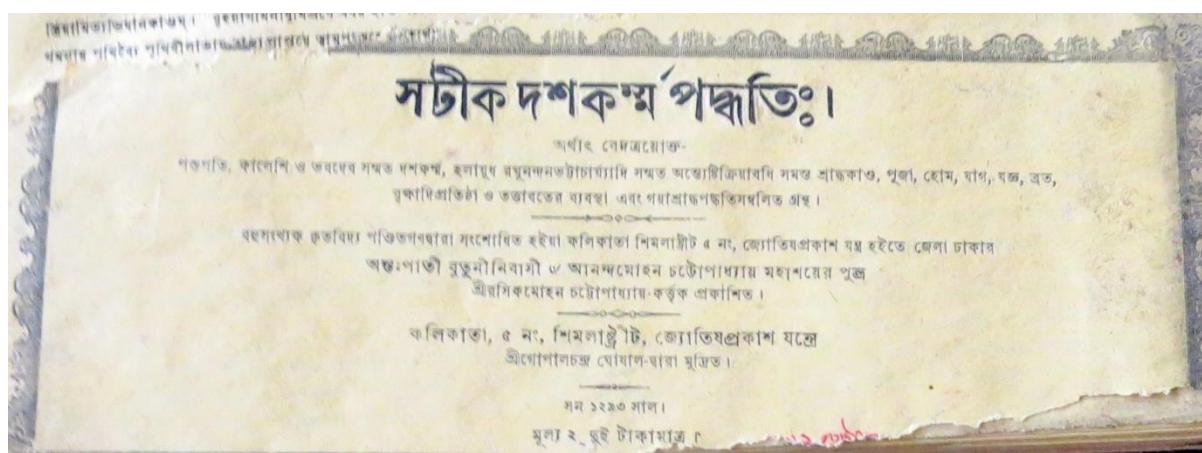
## Ray Family of Cossimbazar



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Around 1700 AD Ajodhya Ram Roy of Pirojpur village near Bhagabangola and the river Padma (who traced his descent from Patrasayer of Burdwan District) came with his family to settle down in Cossimbazar, a renowned port city of Bengal closed to Murshidabad, the capital of the Nawab of Bengal. Ajodhya Ram Roy and his son Dinobandhu Roy were engaged in the business of silk exports and flourished tremendously.

However, Cossimbazar lost its importance as a port city around the middle of 18<sup>th</sup> century as the neck of the meandering Ganges at Cossimbazar was cut to provide a shorter passage of the river from Murshidabad to Berhampore and gradually turned into a village from a vibrant commercial hub. Forced by the circumstances, Jagabandhu Roy, the son of Dinobandhu Roy, took up the service of the East India Company as a *Dewan*. Recognizing his capabilities, the Company sent him to East Bengal as the Surveyor General to conduct land surveys and prepare maps. Subsequently Jagabandhu Roy quit his service and purchased *zamindari* at Sarail (at present in Bangladesh) and emerged as one of the biggest *zamindari* families in Bengal.

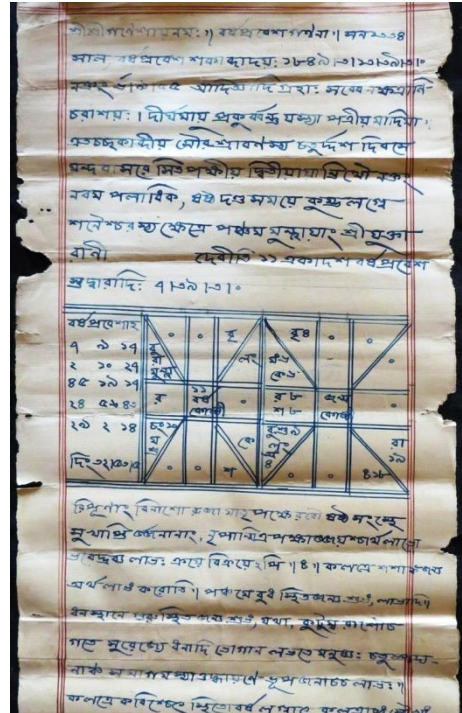


EAP 906: Book printer in the form of a *Punthi* found at the residence of Ray Family, BS 1293 (C. 1887)

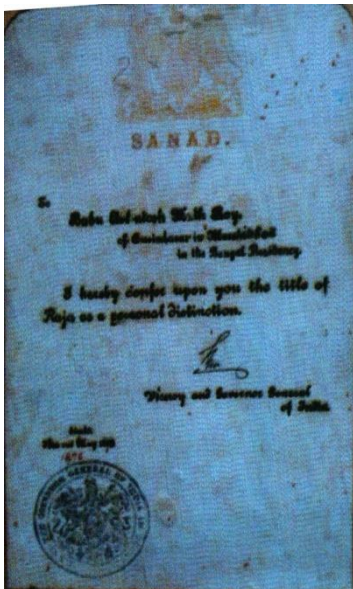
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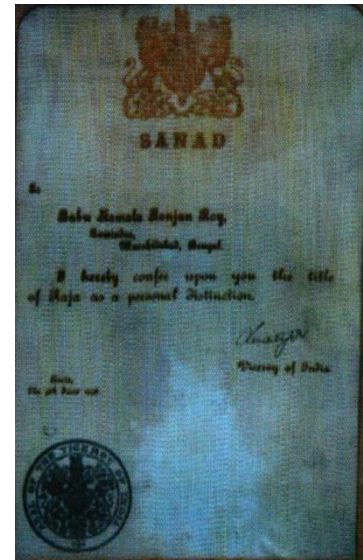
EAP 906: Punthi found at the residence of Ray Family



EAP 906: Yearly Astrological Prediction found at the residence of Ray family



EAP 906: Sanad to Asutoshnath Ray



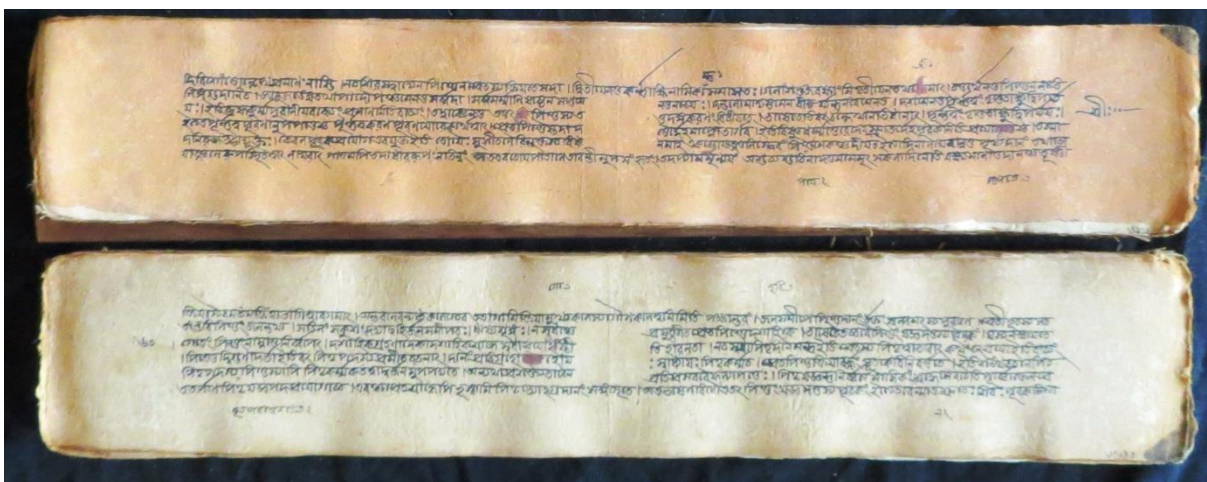
EAP 906: Sanad to Kamalajaranjan Ray

Jagabandhu Roy’s son Nrisingha Prosad Roy built the present palace of the Ray family at Cossimbazar around 1850. His two sons, Nobokrishno and Rajkrishno extended the palace but that was demolished due to the devastating earthquake of 1900. Nobokrishno died without a child. Rajkrishno and his wife Sukhoda Sundari Devi had a son by the name of Annada Prosad. Annada Prosad Roy was a highly educated person. In recognition of his benevolent activities and services to his subject, the British Government



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conferred upon him the title of *Rai Bahadur*. Later the Government decided to confer upon him the title of *Raja*. But unfortunately he expired on the night just before the day the Ceremony. The Government then decided to confer the title of *Rani* to his bereaved wife Annakali Devi at the palace of Cossimbazar. But she politely turned down the proposal. With the passing away of Annada Prosad the estate went under the management of The Court of Wards. Ashutosh Nath Roy, the son of Annada Prosad was groomed under the supervision of the Court of wards. When he attained the age of 18 the Government conferred upon him the Title of *Raja* as a personal distinction at a special ceremony at the Cossimbazar Palace in 1898. Ashutosh Nath Roy and his wife *Rani* Sarojini Devi had three children, two daughters and one son. *Raja* Ashutosh Nath Roy passed away at a very early age leaving behind his wife, two daughters and an infant son Kamalaranjan. Once again the estate passed under the supervision of The Court of Wards. A British Governess named Mrs C. Hickmutt was instated in the palace to groom Kamalaranjan. He received the best education both in European and Indian studies. He completed his BA with Distinction in English and at the same time he was a scholar in Sanskrit, and scriptures. He was widely read in Indian and Western literature, history and legal matters. The estate was managed by a British Manager named Halliday. When Kamalaranjan attained the age of 18 years, the estate was released and under his able leadership the family reached the pinnacle of prosperity and fame. In recognition of his services to his subjects, charitable works, Kamalaranjan was conferred upon the title of *Raja* as a personal distinction in the year 1938. Raja Kamalaranjan Roy was married to Rani Henarani Debi of the Bhukoilash Raj family of Calcutta. *Raja* Kamalaranjan Roy had two daughters and one son by the names of Debika Debi, Bharati Debi and Prosanta Kumar Roy.



EAP 906: Punthi found at the residence of Ray family

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After the abolition of the *zamindari* system in 1950s the family faced severe hardship for time being. However, they recovered shortly. The present family members i.e., Prasanta Kumar Roy, his wife Mrs. Supriya Ray and their son Pallab Ray are very much engaged in business. The Roy family is very much conscious about their family tradition and extremely eager to preserve and restore their Palace at Cossimbazar and other materials under their possession.

The EAP 906 research team was warmly welcomed by the present members of the Ray family. They showed keen interest in preserving the documents under their custody. We found seventeen *punthis* (scriptures) written in Sanskrit and old Bengali script of late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries; some printed books in the form of *punthis*; fifty private letters, seventy astrological predictions and more than 1200 old books of late 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They have tried their best so far to preserve the materials. But they lacked the expertise to do it. The family is eager to digitize the whole collection.

### Dutta Family of Hatkhola

The founder of the Dutta family of Hatkhola is often traced back to Purushottam Dutta. He was originally from Bally. Later he moved to Andul. Purushottam Dutta had three sons, Ramsharan, Gobindasharan and Harisharan. Ramsharan stayed back in Andul. Gobindasharan moved to Garh Gobindapur and Harisharan chose Muragacha in Bengal for settling down. Ramchandra Dutta (the grandson of Gobindasharan), left Garh Gobindapur to settle down in Chitpore in north Calcutta in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Ramsharan Dutta was the *mutsuiddi* of the import-export department of the East India Company. Starting from Purushottam Dutta this family is now under the aegis of the 29<sup>th</sup> generation.

Ramchandra Dutta started working with the East India Company. He was a *mutsuiddi* (middleman) and a *zamindar* as well. His grandson Jagatram Dutta moved to Hatkhola, the main trading centre of Calcutta at that time and permanently settled down there. Jagatram Dutta became the *Dewan* of the East India Company posted at the import-export department of the Patna

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warehouse. He built the gigantic heritage building at Hatkhola, one of the oldest palaces of old Kolkata.

Although they worked with the Company at large but they never lost their identity. Rather they were able to carve out their own independent niche among the British circle. Other notable people from this family included Durgaram Dutta and Madanmohan Dutta. Under Mir Zaffar a committee was constituted of 13 commissioners to decide the fate of the wealth taken off by Siraj ud-Daulah during his invasion of Calcutta in 1756. Durgaram Dutta was one of them. Madanmohan Dutta was the *Dewan* of Lord Fergusson. He was a *Baniyan* (a middleman) and as well as an independent businessman.

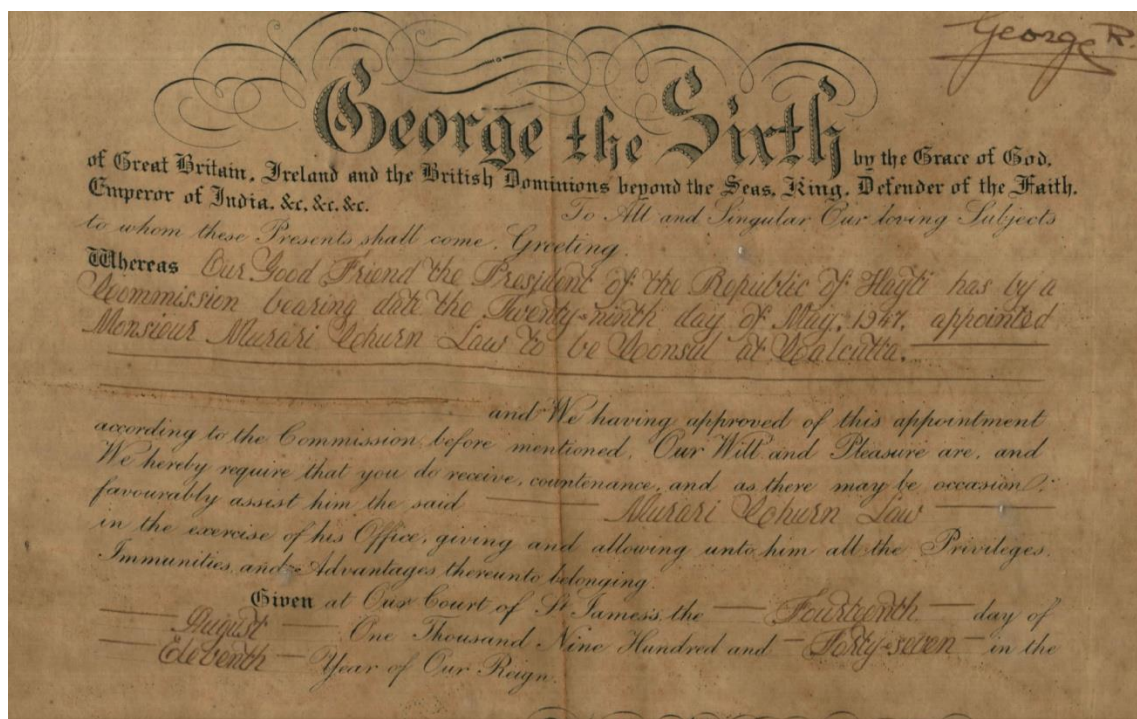
Many people came in contact with the Dutta family that ultimately changed the course of their lives. For example, Shibram Sanyal (father of Madhusudan Sanyal), came to Kolkata leaving Jessore and went into trade with the Dutta family of Hatkhola. It was in Madhusudan Sanyal's house that the first commercial theatre performance of India was housed. Madanmohan Dutta's employee, Ramdulal De became one of the leading traders of Kolkata involved into Indo-American trade. Madanmohan Dutta, himself, was widely engaged in ship business. The Dutta family of Hatkhola is also related to the famous Basu Mullick family of Pataldanga. Madanmohan Dutta's sons, Rasiklal and Haralal founded the famous Durgeswar temple on Madanmohan Dutta Lane in Kolkata. It is also known that Gangadhar Mitra, the grandfather of Pyarichand Mitra, the author of the famous Hatkhola, *Alaler ghore Dulal*, was the son-in-law of Madanmohan Dutta.

The palace of the Dutta family of Hatkhola is also known as *pakhiwala bari* (birds' house). They have a huge collection of native as well as foreign species of birds. One of the descendants of this house, Ramanath Dutta was an avian vet and he was also a very good player of the musical instrument *pakhoyaj*. The family is now branched out into several professions and settled in all over West Bengal and even in the other states of India.



## Law family of Thanthania

The Law family originally hailed from Chitpur village in Saptagram, the famous port city of medieval Bengal. Later they moved to Chinsurah and then finally settled down in Kolkata. Rajiblochan Law, the first notable person of this family was involved in the money lending business. Later he moved to Patna in search for better fortune and took up a job under a famous banker, Nandaram Baijnath. Meanwhile he was engaged in small business. When his sons grew up he left Patna for Bengal. His eldest son, Prankissen Law started building his own business ventures that ultimately led to the flourishing of the family.



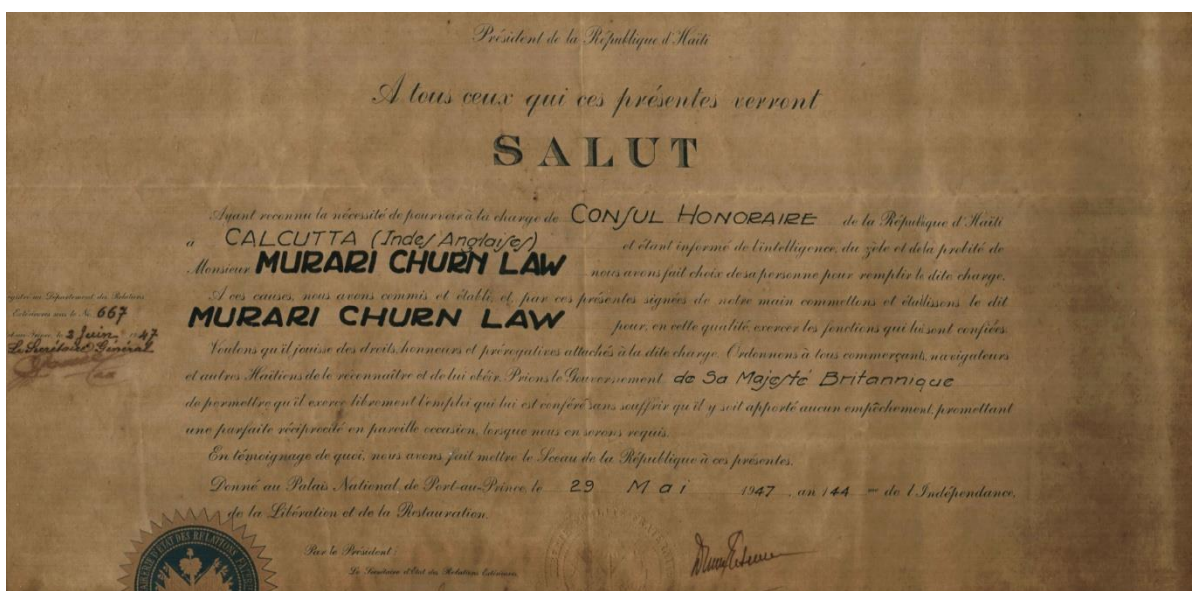
EAP 906: Appointment letter of Murari Charan Law as Consul of Calcutta, 1947

Prankissen, in his early life, worked in Andrews' Library at Chinsurah for a paltry sum. Later on, he joined the provincial court as an assistant. However, his primary aim was to excel in business. He and his father, Rajiblochan settled in Kolkata. After a successful stint in the business they bought the house of 67, Colootola Street. Prankissen took up the job of the head writer in Supreme Court's attorney Howard's office. Simultaneously Prankissen was involved in the trade of salt, opium, piece goods, silk garments, Company papers and foreign made toys. The opium business ultimately brought him hard money for

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him. In 1784, Prankissen suffered a huge loss. But he recovered pretty fast due to his endurance. Prankissen passed away in 1857 leaving three sons and three daughters. The names of the sons were Durgacharan, Shyamacharan and Joygobinda. The business organization built by him in 1839 called as 'Prankissen Law and Company'. This company involved in trade in glass, jute, opium, foreign toys, paper, and garments in their 63, Radhabazar Street house. There were more than 15 departmental stores run by them. In 1853, Durgacharan and his brother opened an agency in London and Manchester. Through this agency they used to trade in English garments and goods. Incidentally, the Law family is one of the inaugurators of the National Bank of India established in 1863. Among the other founders were Hiralal Sheal, Manobji Rustomji, Patitpabon Sen, W. W. Anderson and others. Durgacharan was honoured as the Councillor of Legislative Council, Justice of Peace and Honorary President Magistrate. He received the title of *Raja* in 1891 and later *Maharaja*. He was the first member of Indian Port Commissioner and became a fellow of Calcutta University.

Shyamacharan was Justice of Peace, Honorary Magistrate of 24 Parganas, member of Advice Committee of East Indian Railway and commissioner of Cossipore Municipality. In 1891, he donated Rs.65000 to the Calcutta Medical College for setting up an Eye Infirmary which was inaugurated by Lord



EAP 906: Salute letter from Léon Dumarsais Estimé, President of Haiti, 1947

Lansdown. He, along with Swami Vivekananda, Maharaja Jatindramohan Tagore, Pandit Satishchandra Bidyabivushan forced the government to ban the

## Report of EAP 906

practice of Kulin polygamy. Prankissen's youngest son Joygobinda was a long time member in the municipality committee. He was also the justice of peace, Sheriff of Kolkata and Honorary Magistrate of 24 Parganas. Law family owned *zamindaris* in Kumilla, Khulna, Feni, Bagura, Barishal and certain areas of Dhaka in present day Bangladesh, Baduria in 24 parganas, Basirhat, Deganga, Bokkhali and some areas of Medinipur In West Bengal.



EAP 906: Family photograph with Rabindranath Tagore

Presently, a section of this family is still engaged in multifarious businesses and others have chosen professions other than business.

We have explored the appointment letter of Murari Charan Law as Consul of Calcutta, a salute letter from Léon Dumarsais Estimé, the President of Haiti, list of the Sheriffs of Calcutta From 1775 to 1953 and large number of letters and family photographs. They have a collection of old costumes and jewelleryes.

## Motila Family of Bowbazar

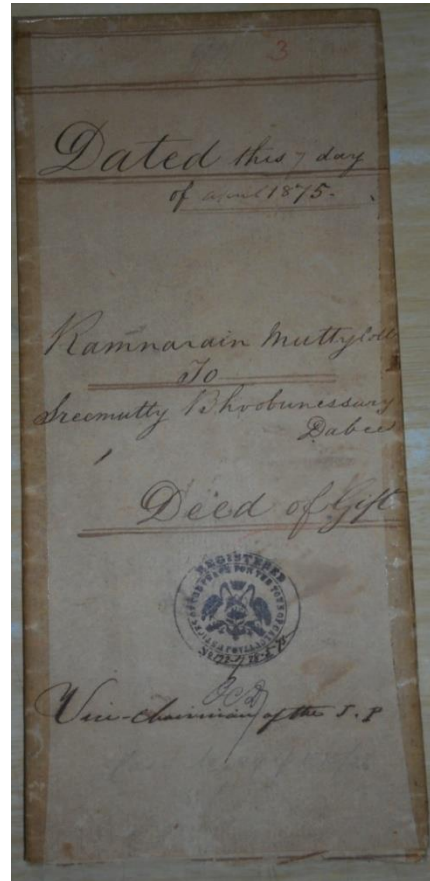


## Report of EAP 906

The Motilal family of Bowbazar was founded by Biswanath Motilal, a renowned salt merchant of Kolkata. He was born in 1779 and rose to prominence from an ordinary position.



EAP 906: Portrait of Biswanath Motilal



EAP 906: Deed of Gift, 1875

Biswanath Motilal originally hailed from the village of Joynagar, Majilpur. He belonged to the Rarhi- Brahmin caste and grew up under the tutelage of his maternal uncle, renowned businessman, Durga Charan Pithuri. Durga Charan was highly impressed by his business initiatives and willed him almost half of his properties. He had entered the salt trade in partnership with Rammohan Mallick of Barabazar. But Biswanath was unsuccessful in business. Then he joined in the service of the East India Company as a clerk in Company's salt depot at Shalkia on a monthly salary of Rs. 8/- only. Later he was promoted to the rank of *Dewan* of salt by the East India Company. He received the title of *Babu* by Queen Victoria and gradually came to be known as *Babu* Biswanath Motilal.

Biswanath had own business too which made him a leading merchant of his time. However, he suffered a huge loss during the financial crisis of early 1830s

## Report of EAP 906

following the fall of the older agency houses like Messrs Palmer & Co., Messrs Alexander & Co., Messrs Mackintosh & Co., Messrs Fergusson & Co. and Cruttenden Mackillop & Co. as he had close financial ties with them. He died in 1844 leaving behind property worth 15 lakhs of rupees for his three sons and one daughter.

Biswanath Motilal was highly involved in socio-cultural activities. He was a staunch connoisseur and patron of music and theatre. He was an ardent follower of musical trends, especially that of Indian classical music and Bengali folk music. He, once, famously hosted the eminent folk music artist of that time, Gopal Ure. Later, he contributed to the rise and prominence of Gopal Ure among the contemporaneous elite Bengali audience to a certain degree. Biswanath Motilal also generously spent money for the spread of education in Bengal.



EAP 906: Photograph of two male members with the family deity, Goddess Jagatdhatri



EAP 906: Photograph of the family deity, Goddess Jagatdhatri

Now the family has been divided into so many fractions and settled in different parts of Kolkata. The EAP research visited the original house of the Motilal family situated at Bowbazar in North Kolkata and met the elder members of the family. We found a number of Deed of Gift, the oldest one dates back to 1875; a family history book in Bengali entitled *Bowbazarer Molilal Bansha* (*The*

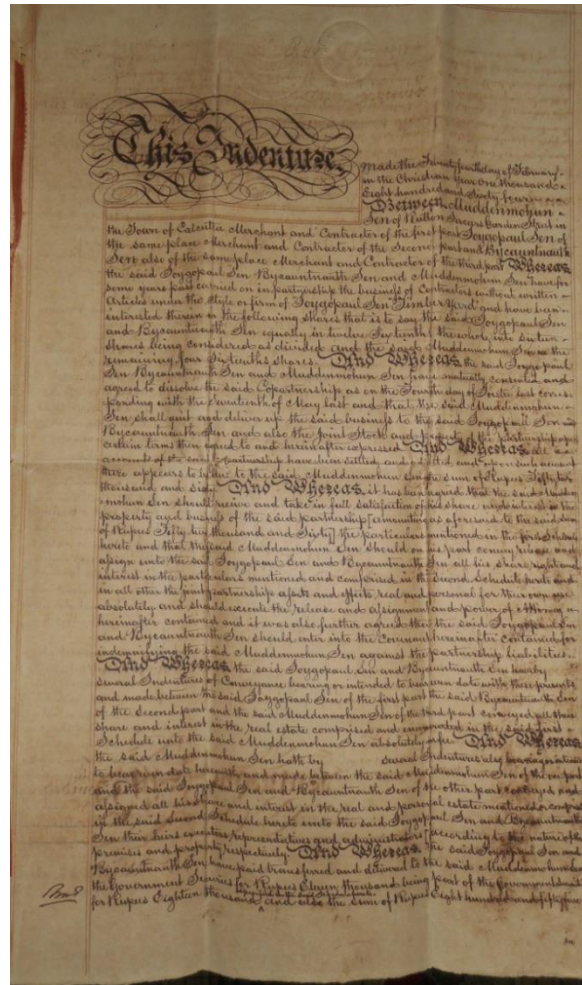
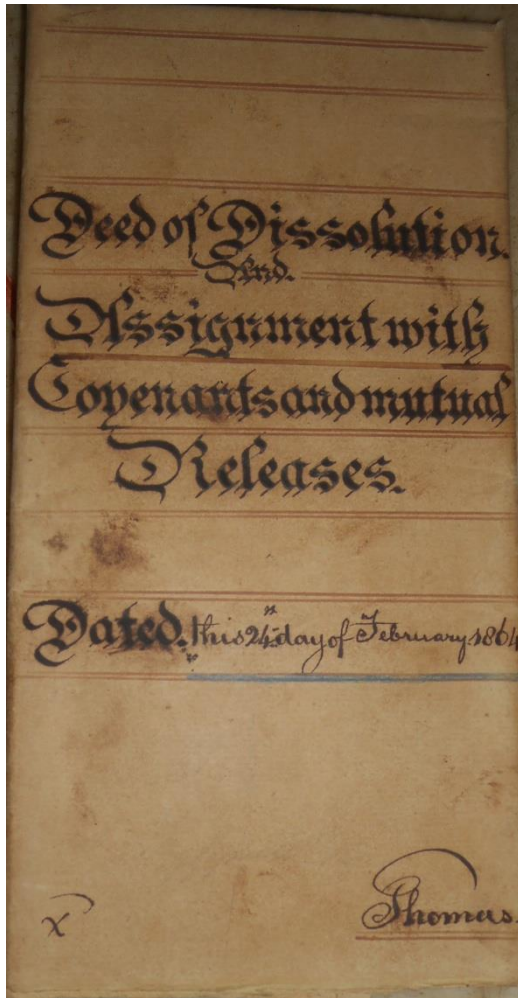
## Report of EAP 906

*Motilal Family of Bowbazar*) written by Satish Chandra Motilal published in 1935 and a some old family photographs including a portrait of Biswanath Motilal.

### Seal Family of Colootola

Motilal Seal (1792- 1854) was born in a Bengali Hindu family in Kolkata around 1792. He belonged to the Subornabanik caste. His father, Chaitanya Charan Seal was the owner of a small clothing and garments shop near Chinabazar, Kolkata. His life took a turn when he married Nagri Dasse, daughter of Mohan Chand Dey of Surtir Bagan, in 1809. He started working at Fort William around 1815, the then bastion of British supremacy. While working at Fort William, he was engaged in supply of essential commodities to the British army. Later, he also worked as an inspector of Indian Customs at Balikhal. He started out his business venture as a bottle and cork dealer. He traded in cowhides, was the founder and promoter of the first indigo mart which was established under the name of M/s Moore, Hickey & Co. He used to export indigo, silk, sugar, saltpetre and rice to the European countries. He used to import cotton-piece goods and iron from Europe. He was appointed as Banian of around twenty first class agency houses of Kolkata. He used to earn huge profits from these ventures and invested these profits again in his other business ventures. He never invested his money in the Company papers or securities. He bought around 12-13 merchant ships.



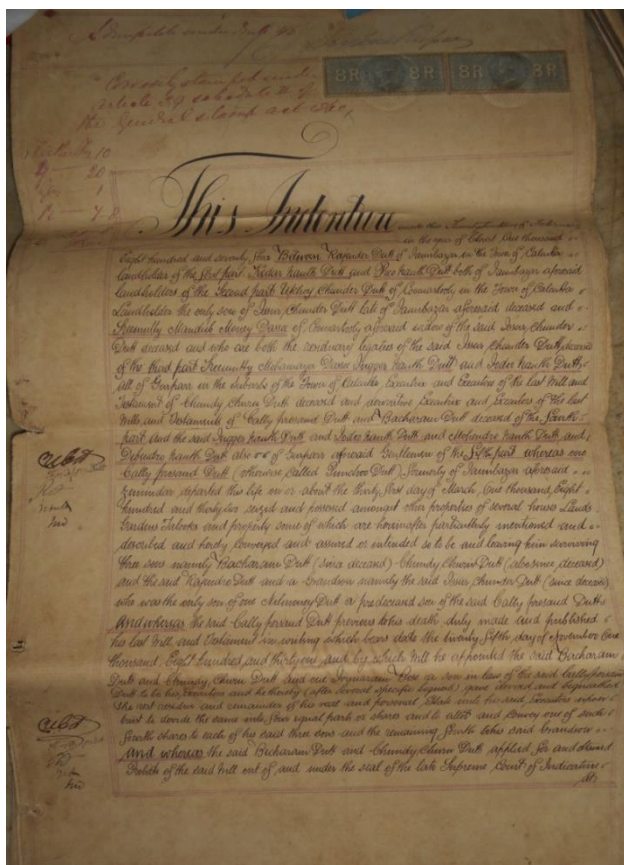


EAP 906: Deed of 24.2.1864

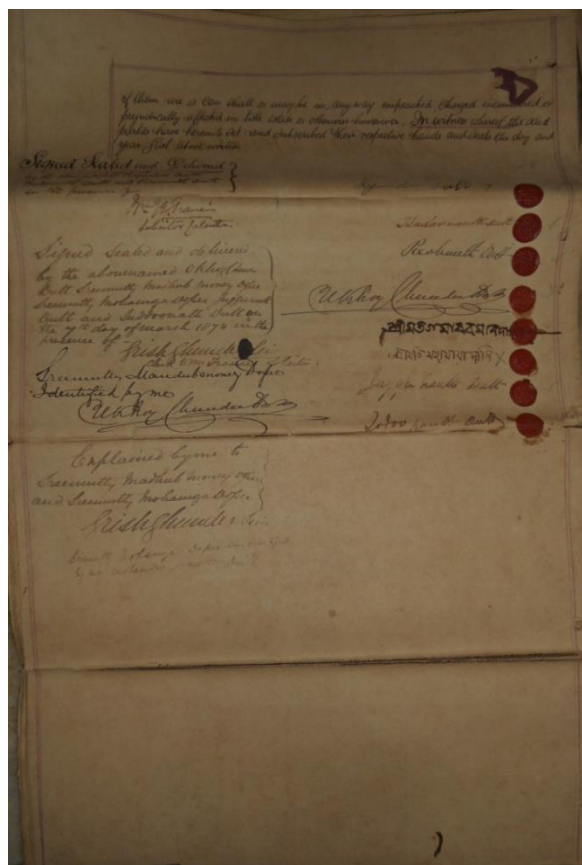
He also invested his money in buying big zamindaries near Kolaghat, Bagnan, Mahishadal, Jessore and other parts of Bengal. He also became a real estate speculator and a successful merchant in partnership with *Fergusson Brothers & Co.*, *Oswald Seal & Co.* and *Tulloch & Co.* and in these firms he was said to have lost some thirty lakh of rupees. He got up a number of cargo boats which were then a new speculation in the market. He was the first to use steamships for internal trade in Kolkata. He prospered profusely in competition with Europeans. He made a vast fortune in money-dealing, bill discounting and other banking business. There was rarely a speculation into which he did not participate, and for which he did not supply a portion of funds. From dealings in internal changes to contracts for station-building, for the erection of new bazaars to revival of transit companies, he was a quiet shareholder. He was one of the founders of Assam Company Ltd. Under his influence, the then

## Report of EAP 906

Oriental Life Insurance Company (later known as New Oriental Insurance Company in 1834) founded by the Europeans, being the first life insurance company on Indian soil, accepted to underwrite Indian lives. He was among the founders of Bank of India. He was on the board of Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India. He was known as the Rothschild of Calcutta.



EAP 906: Indenture of 27.02.1874 (First Page)



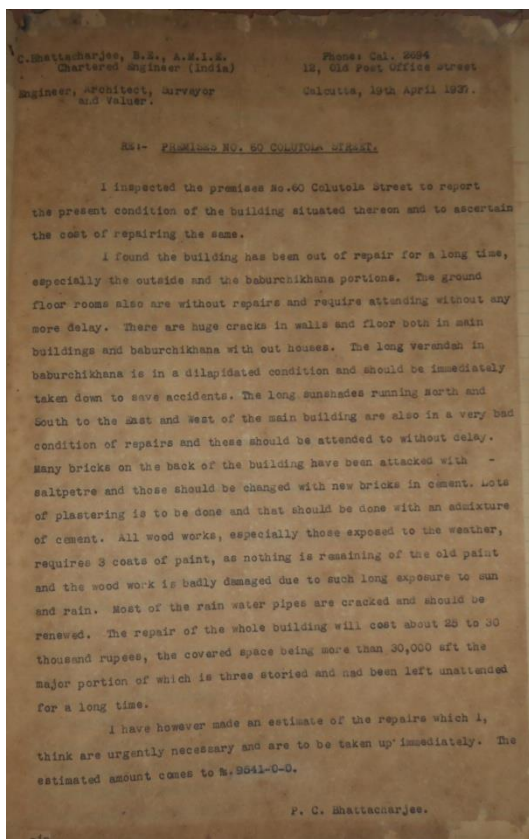
EAP 906: Indenture of 27.02.1874 (Last Page)

He was also a renowned philanthropist. He founded an alms house at Belgharia in 1841 and a bathing ghat on the bank of the Hooghly River known as Motilal Ghat which to this day still exists. He is best remembered for his donation of an extensive tract of land on which the Calcutta Medical College was built. In 1842, he founded the Mutty Lall Seal's Free College (later renamed as Mutty Lall Seal's Free School and College) was to provide education to the Hindus to enable them to occupy posts of trust and emolument in their own country. The college had established huge public reputation and competed successfully with the Government and Missionary Colleges in the University exams. The college is now situated near Chittaranjan Avenue where it still exists.



## Report of EAP 906

He extended financial support and co-operation for the establishment of Hindu Charitable Institution and Hindu Metropolitan College and some other institutions. Although, Motilal Seal himself was a conservative Hindu he was in favour of Raja Rammohun Roy's efforts of banning sati, supported the cause of women's education as well as the issue of widow remarriage. He made a public offer for a dowry of 1000 rupees to the person who could break the ancient taboos of caste and marry a widow. One of the busy streets in Kolkata's business district is named after him as *Moti Sil Street*. He had five sons and five daughters. The eldest son, Hiralal Seal was also an eminent personality. He opened an alms house in 1864. He also helped Michael Madhusudan Dutta to get his license to practice law. Motilal's youngest son, Gopal Lal Seal had a



EAP 906: Letter from the appointed engineer regarding the repairing of the house of Motilal Seal (19.4.1937)

No.	Details of Works	Quantity	Rate	Per	Rs.	As.	Pis.	REMARKS
	supplying & fixing R.S.Joint	31 Cts.	11/-	Crt.	341	-	-	
	Changing beams including removing old beam, propping roof, fixing the R.S.Joint in cement brickwork for span of 15 ft.	2 Nos.	6/-	each	10	-	-	
	Do. Do. for spans 10 to 15 ft.	8 "	6/-	"	48	-	-	
	Do. Do. more than 15 ft.	8 "	10/-	"	80	-	-	
	Changing Bargees including supplying teak wood.	582 pcs	-/10"	"	582	-	-	
	Stripping off old plaster in wall & raking out joints.	25000	-/6/-	sq	94	-	-	
	Sand plaster in wall 1" to 1 1/2" thick admixture with cement	25000	4/-	sq	1000	-	-	
	Repairing cracks with cement grouting & steel wedges.	308 Rft.	-/4/-	Rft	76	-	-	
	Repairing cracks with interior part cement brickwork.	266 "	-/3/-	Rft	128	-	-	
	Taking down existing damaged sunshades.	L.S.			20	-	-	
	Repairing sunshades with old and new materials.	310 Rft	-/12/-	Rft.	233	-	-	
	Supplying and fixing angle iron brackets to support projected bath rooms.	10 Nos.	10/-	ea.	100	-	-	
	Constructing R.C.floor over projected beams & brackets in bath-rooms including finishing the top with final cement plastering.	220 Rft	50/-		110	-	-	
	Carried over				2500	-	-	

EAP 906: First page of the estimate of the engineer

penchant for horse collection. He had an exclusive collection of horses in his stable which was quite rare in his times. He used to spend huge amount of money on occasions of dances, ballroom parties, etc where the Governor General was a regular attendee along with his family. He was very popular with the British government as to be offered the title of '*Maharaja*'. But he refused it. After Motilal Seal, his Colootola house has become the official residence

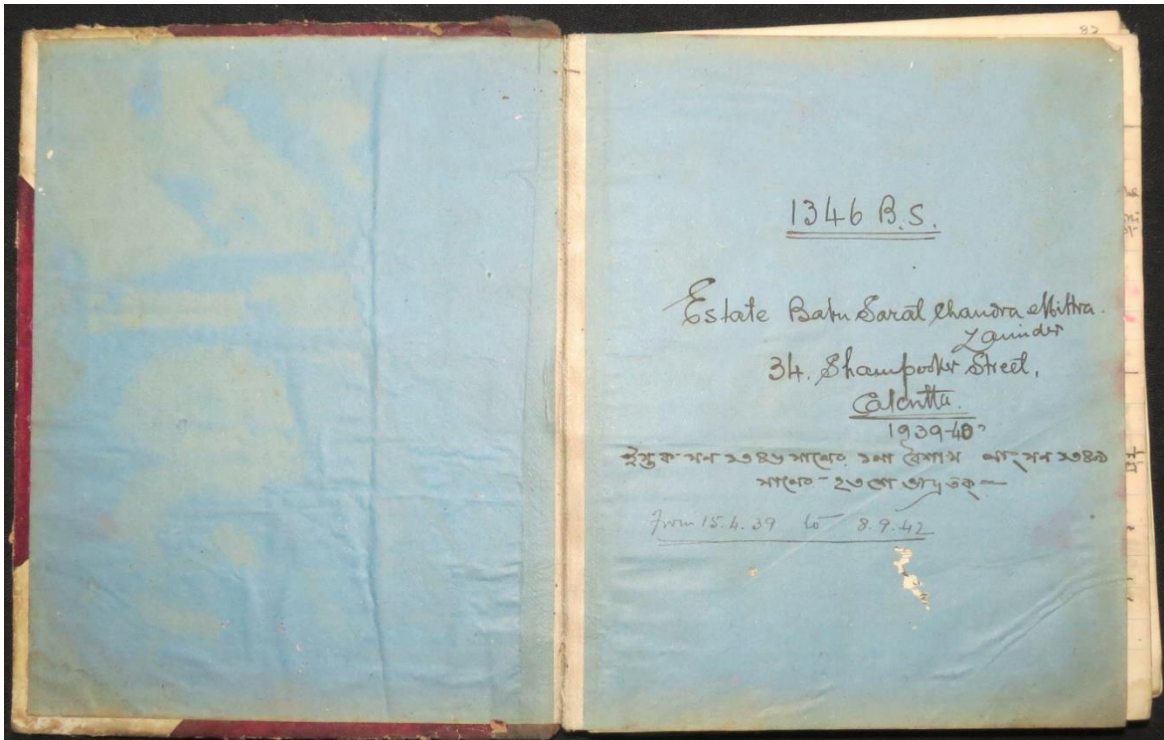
## **Report of EAP 906**

from the fifth generation. Nowadays, the main capital for the sustenance of this family is through management of landed estate and renting of the portions of this house. They are still the shareholders of one of the biggest markets in Howrah. Presently, this family has branched out into professions such as engineering, medical, teaching, etc.

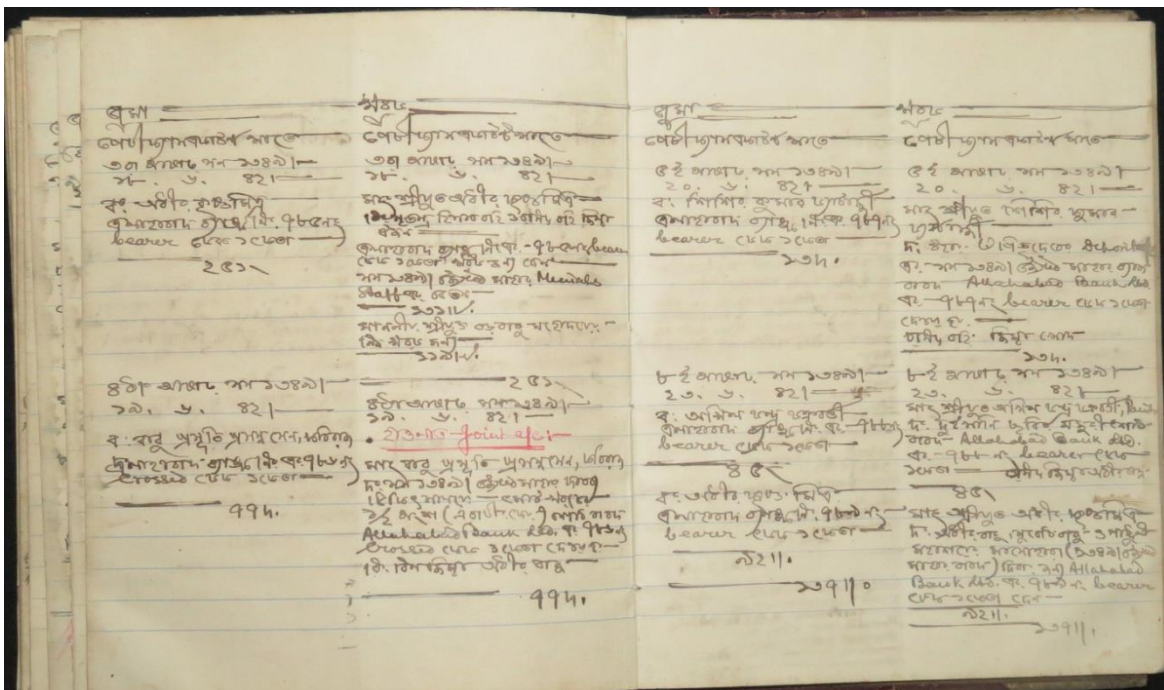
We have found some important legal documents since 1864 to 1937, a handwritten family history of 151 pages; a detailed report on the condition of the palace of Motilal Seal conducted by an engineer in 1937 with an estimate of renovation of the building.

### **Mitra Family of Shyampukur**

The founder of the Mitra family of Shyampukur was Digambar Mitra (1817 – 1879). He belonged to the Mandirabati Mitra family of Konnagar. His grandfather, Ramchandra Mitra had sons, Shib Chandra, Shambhu Chandra and Rajkrishna. Digambar Mitra was the son of Shib Chandra Mitra. He was educated at Hare School and later Hindu College and was one of the leading disciples of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio. He left the college in 1834 and moved to Murshidabad and took a teaching assignment in the Nizamat school there. Later on, he left that job and joined as the head clerk under the District Magistrate and Collector of Rajshahi. But he was not satisfied with the job. He came back to Murshidabad and joined the service of the East India Company as tashildar, amin. Towards the end of 1838 he was appointed as the mentor of the young Raja Krishnanath of Cossimbazar Rajbari. Later he was promoted to the rank of Manager of Cossimbazar Raj. He was rewarded with Rupees one lakh by the minor Raja of Cossinbazar for his excellent service to the Estate.



EAP 906: Estate Record Book of Mitra family (title page), 1939-1942



EAP 906: Estate Record Book of Mitra family (inside view), 1939-1942

In 1842, Raja Krishnanath moved to Calcutta and settled down there. However, the relationship between Digambar Mitra and Raja Krishnanath considerably soured over the time. In 1844 Raja Krishnanath committed suicide. Digambar Mitra left the service of Cossimbazar Rajbari and stated his career of business by investing his capital in indigo and silk manufacturing. He soon had silk

## Report of EAP 906

factories in Ramkhollah, Rajapatty, Mirzapur and Daulatbazar in Murshibad. His silk was prepared and assorted after European method. He had his own trademark bearing his initials DM under which it was placed for sale in market. It became a well-known mark that readily found buyers, and fetched prices next to the qualities produced by Messrs. Watson & Co., the great silk merchants of the time. In the course of his mercantile transactions, he came into close contact with the leading members of the Union Bank and started putting his money in speculation. He suffered heavy loss due to the fall of Union Bank in 1849. When the Bank failed in 1849, he was left with only Rs. 25000/-. But with this small amount of capital, he did miracle. He recovered steadily. He was engaged in stock dealing. He also started investing in land and became a zaminder. He acquired landed properties in Joynagar, Konnagar, Raichak, Baruipur and other places.

Digambar Mitra was not only a renowned Bengali businessman of his time; he was actively involved in other spheres of life. He became the assistant secretary of the British Indian Association in 1851 and later on became the President of Indian Association. He became the sub-editor of 'Bharat Sabha'. In 1874, he became the first Bengali Sheriff of Calcutta. Before that, he presided over various committees and commissions. He was the only Indian representative in 'Epidemic Fever Commission'. He produced an excellent book in 1876 entitled "*The Epidemic Fever in Bengal*". He was a staunch orthodox Hindu and opposed the issues of abolition of Kulin polygamy practice and widow remarriage.

Digambar Mitra passed away in 1879. His son, Girish Chandra passed away before him. Girish Chandra had two sons, Manmathanath and Narendranath. They started a charitable dispensary after the name of Girish Chandra Mitra. It became famous for ayurvedic treatment. The eminent ayurvedic practitioners (*kabiraj*) in Kolkata used to supervise the treatment of the patients there.

Manmathanath and Narendranath were involved in many philanthropic works. They donated heavily for Victoria Memorial fund, South Africa War Fund, famine relief fund, Prince Albert Victor Hospital, and Carmichael Medical College. Later Manmathanath left Jhamapukur Rajbari and bought a mansion from R. Mitter, an eminent lawyer of that time, and settled in Shyampukur (which later came to be known as Shyampukur Rajbari. He had seven sons.



## Report of EAP 906

Narendranath remained in the ancestral house in Jhamapukur. Shyampukur Rajbari, presently, houses the descendants of Narendranath. Presently, both the descendants of Jhamapukur Rajbari and Shyampukur Rajbari are involved in various professions other than business.

We found eleven volumes of Estate Records of the Mitra family (14.04.1937 - 15.08.1952), sixteen pages of Stock Register (08.11.1944 - 16.11.1945), two volumes of letters (27 pages), three books entitled *Unrepealed General Acts (Vol.II)*, 1876, *Thacker's Directory of the Chief Industries of India, Burma and Ceylon*, 1926 and *Trilingual Dictionary (Bengali, Sanskrit and English)*, undated, two manuscripts (200 pages) and 16 family photographs.

### **B.K. Paul and Family**

Butto Kristo Paul was born in 1835 near Shibpur in Howrah, Bengal. His father, Lakshminarayan Pal was a petty businessman but not very well off. When Butto Kristo was around 12 years of age he left Shibpur to settle down in his maternal house in Sobhabazar in north Calcutta. His maternal grandfather bought a small estate near Sobhabazar -Beniatola region in north Kolkata where eventually Butto Kristo started living in. His maternal uncle, Ramkumar had a small spice shop in Natunbazar in north Kolkata where Butto Kristo first started working in. But he always dreamt of carrying out his own independent business ventures from a very young age. This prompted him to leave the spice shop behind and start an opium selling shop when he was just 16 years old in the Chitpore region of north Kolkata. It was a flourishing business by then. However, Butto Kristo always felt guilty about selling opium and he abruptly called off the opium shop in Chitpore and went to Baidyabati in Hoogly. He started a jute shop there with a very small amount of capital.



EAP 906: House of B.K.Paul, 1906



EAP 906: House of B.K.Paul, 2016

However, he was not satisfied with his Jute business and opened up a small spice shop in Sobhabazar Street in north Kolkata. Again, he withdrew from this venture and started a medicine shop in 120/121 Sobhabazar Street with the help of Madhab Chandra Daw. He was very aware of the pulse of the people who were by then shifting from traditional medicinal practices like ayurvedic medicines to western allopathic medications introduced by the British. There was a rising demand for allopathic medicines in the market. He started contacting agents in Kolkata who were attached with foreign medicine companies and started bringing medicines from London. These medicines were sold from his shop which was named as "Butto Kristo Paul and Company". He used to sell these medicines at lower rates than his fellow foreign medicine shops in Kolkata and thus he attracted the buyers. Apart from importing and selling allopathic medicines he also started popularizing the allopathic medication among the native population of Kolkata.

Butto Kristo Paul bought a three-storied building on 7, Bonfield Lane and opened up a new medicine shop there. Later he purchased land and built up a house on 12, Bonfield lane. They opened up a store-house on 16/17 Chinabazar street in Kolkata. They built another huge house on 30, Sobhabazar Street in 1904. They opened up a dispensary in this house too. In 1909, they

## Report of EAP 906

bought a mansion on 13, Bonfield Lane. They opened up a research laboratory in 18, Shashibhushan Sur Lane in 1912. They opened up around 16 departments in medicinal instruments, medicine making, dentistry, eye treatment, homeopathy, ayurveda, patent medicine, photography, etc. There was also a separate veterinary department for the treatment of the animals. He engaged his elder son, Bhootnath Paul, to his flourishing business. It was Bhootnath who made the Butto Kristo Paul and Company a household name in Bengal through the use of advertisements in the leading newspapers, magazines and even in the traditional almanacs. His sons, Harishankar and Harimohan were also engaged in the family business. Harishankar went to England to have a firsthand experience on the operation of the medicine business there. In 1930, he was awarded the title of Knighthood. Harishankar was not only a renowned businessman but also an enthusiastic social worker. In 1936, he became the mayor of Calcutta Municipal Corporations. He also founded the Bengal Chemists and Druggists Association.



EAP 906: Seal of B.K.Paul & Co

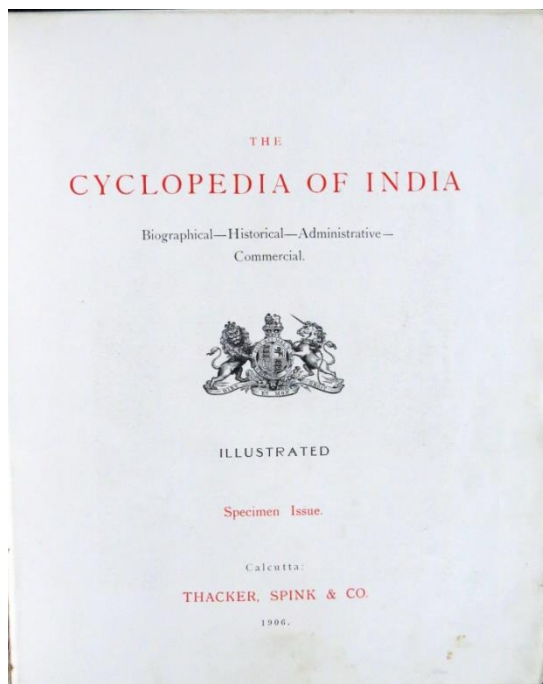


EAP 906: Advertisement of Edward Tonic

The medicine business of Butto Kristo Paul and Company acquired so much reputation that that the *Indian Medical Record* stated in 1909 in that 'Calcutta can at least boast of one pharmacy organized and financed solely by Indian brain and Capital/which/only through unstinted honesty of purpose and dogged perseverance of its founder proprietor, has fully won the confidence and esteem of even in the Western world.'



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EAP 906: Cyclopaedia of India, 1906



EAP 906: Letterhead of B.K.Paul

In the house of B.K.Paul we found some old labels, posters and advertisements of medicine, almanacs published by B.K. Paul & Co., seal and letterhead of the company, family photographs and a book entitled *The Cyclopaedia Of India* (1906) where the life and works of B.K.Paul was mentioned.

### **Daw Family of Jorasanko (Narasimha Chandra Daw & Family)**

20, Vivekananda Road, Kolkata- 700006

Contact Person: Abhir Daw

A fraction of the Daw family headed by Ramnarayan Daw settled at Jorasanko in Calcutta at the very beginning of the nineteenth century migrating from their ancestral village of Kotulpur of the present district of Bankura, West Bengal. One of his descendants, Narasimha Chandra Daw was initially engaged in spice trade and later he moved on to a more profitable business of gun selling. He opened up a gun shop in 9, Dalhousie Square, BBD Bag, Calcutta-700001 named '*Narasimha Chandra Daw and Co., Gun and Rifle Makers*' in around 1835. The context for opening up a gun shop was to provide the provincial rulers or native Rajas of India specially that of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa for personal safety as well as for wildlife hunting or *shikar* purposes. During the early rule of East India Co., there was stiff competition and petty



## Report of EAP 906

intra-regional political rivalry between these native regional rulers for which they maintained their own respective arms arsenals. Very quickly, this class of Indian chiefs, Rajas, zamindars and other petty regional rulers, became steady buyers of arms and ammunition of this company. They also provided licenses along with the guns and rifles to this elite class of buyers. Gradually, a steady market of muzzle loading guns appeared vis-à-vis this company quickly emerged as a leading gun merchant in whole India competing with other cotemporary European gun merchants. During the revolt of 1857, they started marketing the breech loading guns and revolvers. They also started selling small sized canons. These canons were 17 inches long and produced by Winchester Repeating Arms which are still used to initiate *sandhi puja* during Durga Puja every year in their old house on Vivekananda Road.



EAP 906: Gun shop of N.C.Daw & Co.

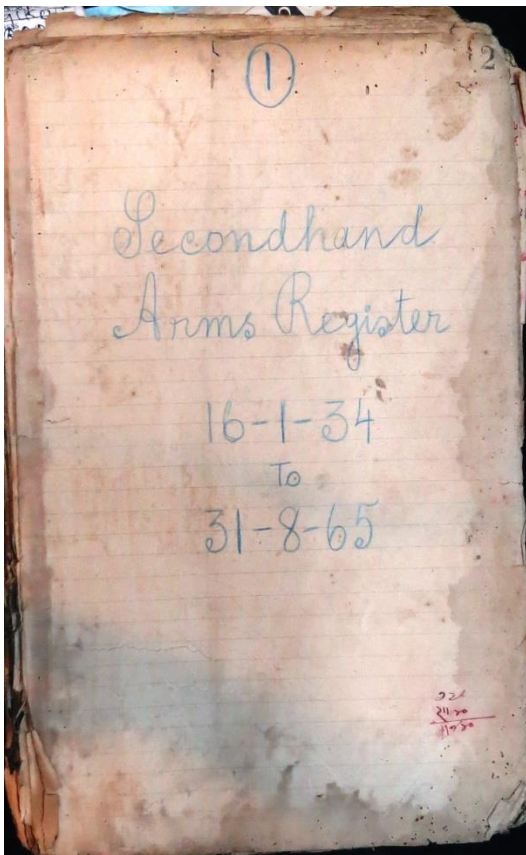


EAP 906: Gun shop of N.C.Daw & Co.

During the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, guns were primarily imported from England and Germany. R. B Roda and Co. and Manton and Co. were the two major European gun sellers in Kolkata during that time. The Daws had to face stiff competition with them in the market and the pressure was more so because it was an indigenous business venture under a colonial rule. Gradually they took the lead in the market and virtually become the monopoly gun sellers to the Indian chiefs as well as the officials of the East India Company. After Narasimha Daw, the business was looked after by his three sons, Ashutosh, Neelmadhab and Nandalal. Due to an exponential increase in demand, Ashutosh Daw opened up a new shop named 'A.T Daw and Co.' in 1884 at Dharmatola Street in Calcutta. The customers of the Daw family

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included the royal families of Nepal, Jaipur, Tripura, Bhutan, Sikkim, Assam and all the leading *zamindari* families of Bengal. During the Post-independence era, there was a steady decline in the authority of the Indian chiefs and landlords who were the chief buyers of guns. Simultaneously, with the growing restrictions on the practice of hunting, the demand for guns decreased to a great extent. Naturally the gun business of the Daw family was affected badly. However, they found new buyers of guns among the big factory owners, the government of India and the shooters of various events of shooting. Both the N. C Daw and Company and A.T. Daw and Company have branches in different parts of Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand.



EAP 906: Second-hand Arms register, 1934-65  
Title page

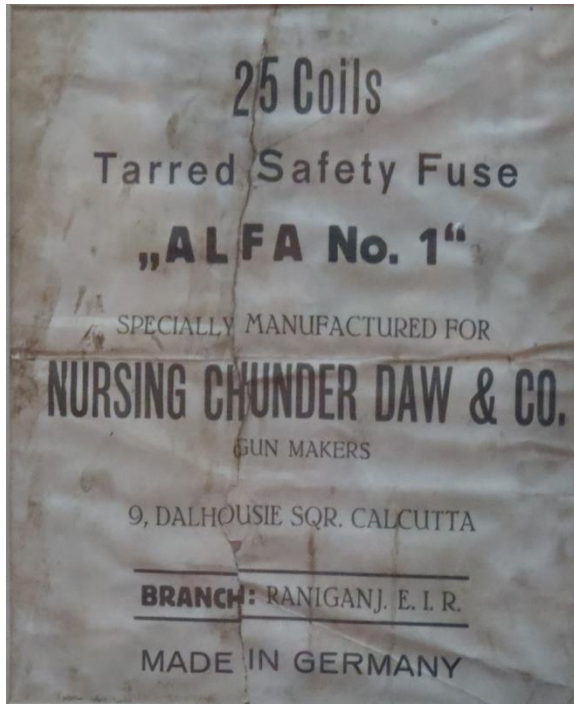
Date	Description	Price	Notes
10.10.34	S.P. 12	William Cook 6903	Sold
11.10.34	S.P. 12	R.S. 16244	
15.11.34	S.P. 12	Sabur 730	Sold
5.12.34	S.P. 12	12009	
18.12.34	S.P. 12	1712	Sold
18.12.34	S.P. 12	12009	
26.12.34	S.P. 12	12009	
2.1.35	S.P. 12	80220	
24.1.35	S.P. 12	13887	
31.1.34	S.P. 12	25270	
1.2.35	S.P. 12	10494	
1.2.35	S.P. 12	25321	
1.2.35	S.P. 12	79534	
1.2.35	S.P. 12	14999	
1.2.35	S.P. 12	30676	
19.2.35	S.P. 12	106	N.C
1.3.35	S.P. 12	198	
1.3.35	S.P. 12	7874	
1.3.35	S.P. 12	6732	
1.3.35	S.P. 12	4637	
1.3.35	S.P. 12	4570	
1.3.35	S.P. 12	468	

EAP 906: Second-hand Arms register, 1934-65

The Daw family is well known for its Durga Puja which was initiated around 1859 by late Nandalal Daw. It still continues with the same grandeur as before. Most of the members of the Daw family are still engaged in their old family business.



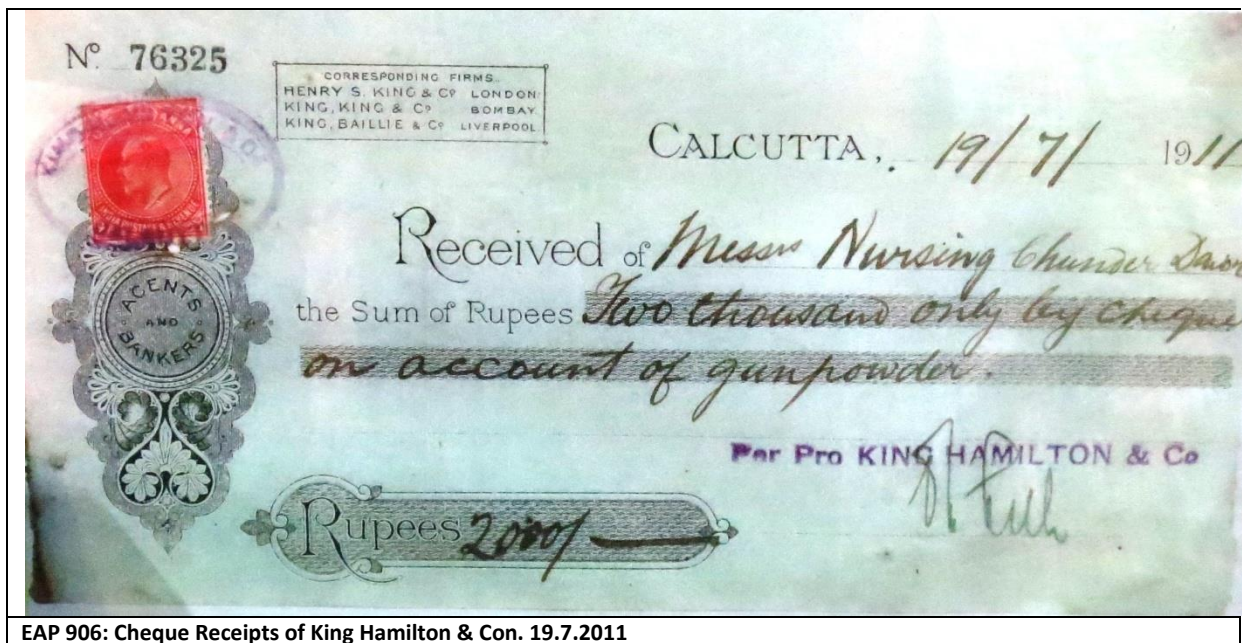
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EAP 906: Advertisement of 25 Coils Tarred Safety Fuse



EAP 906: Trade Licence of N.C. Daw & Con. 1896-97



EAP 906: Cheque Receipts of King Hamilton & Con. 19.7.2011

A the house and the shop of the Daw family we found a trade license of 1896-97, an appoint letter of agent ship from the Khan of Kalat, Beluchistan, an appointment letter from the Governor of Assam as supplier of arms and ammunition, a catalogue of arms, ammunition and accessories of 1939-40; a money receipt of 1911 from King Hamilton & Co. , a register of second hand

## Report of EAP 906

arms (16.1934-31.8.1965) and family photographs of Narasimha Daw, Dhanakrishna Daw, Nandalal Daw, Asutosh Daw and Nilmadhab Daw.

### **Daw Family of Jorasanko (Shib Krishna Daw & Family)**

The Daw family of Jorasanko headed by Shib Krishna Daw became one of the leading business families of nineteenth century Bengal. The family founder Gakul Chandra Daw came and settled down in Kolkata from Satgachhia village of Burdwan. He belonged to the *Gandhabanik* caste, a traditional trading caste of Bengal. Gakul Chandra Daw carried out his business in collaboration with his maternal cousin, Haladhar Dutta. He never had any son of his own whereas Haladhar had two sons, Shib Krishna and Rajkrishna Dutta. Gakul Chandra eventually adopted Shib Krishna. Thus his adopted son Shib Krishna came to be known as Shib Krishna Daw.

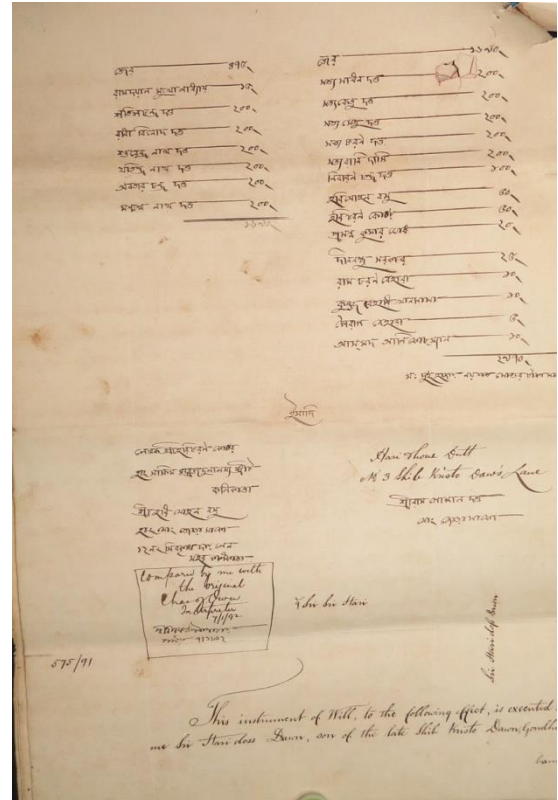
After the death of Gakul Chandra Daw, Shib Krishna inherited the family property and businesses. He had the spirit of a true entrepreneur. Shib Krishna ventured in the field of coal mining in Raniganj Asansol coalfields area following the path of Dwarkanath Tagore of his own locality. He opened up coal mines in Seebpore and Koithi. Shib Krishna Daw and Company opened up a narrow gauge rail line in collaboration with the Armenian company, Apcar & Co. in 1876 in Seebpur coal mines area which facilitated the transportation of coal. Shib Krishna died in 1873 leaving behind his wife Kadambari Dasi and two minor sons, Purna Chandra and Haridas. Through his last will Shib Krishna made Kadambari Dasi and Krishnadhan Dutta as the executrix and executor respectively of his property as both of his sons were minors. Later in 1891 Haridas made his mother and elder brother the legal heir of his property through a will as he had no son.



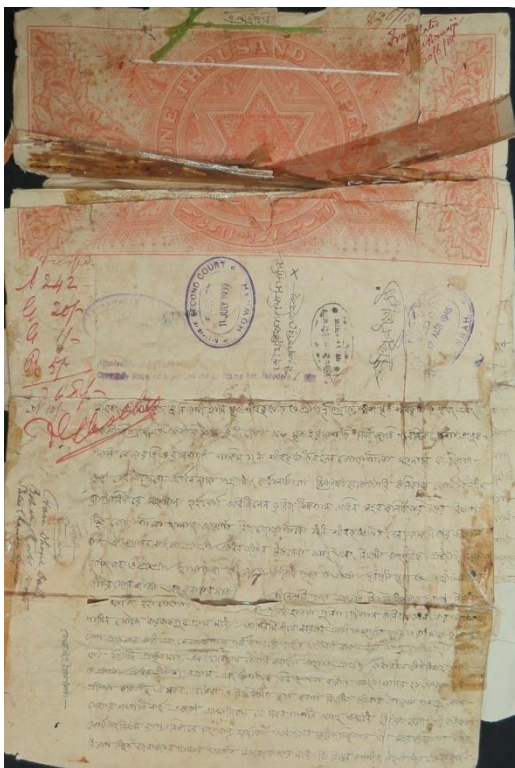
# Report of EAP 906



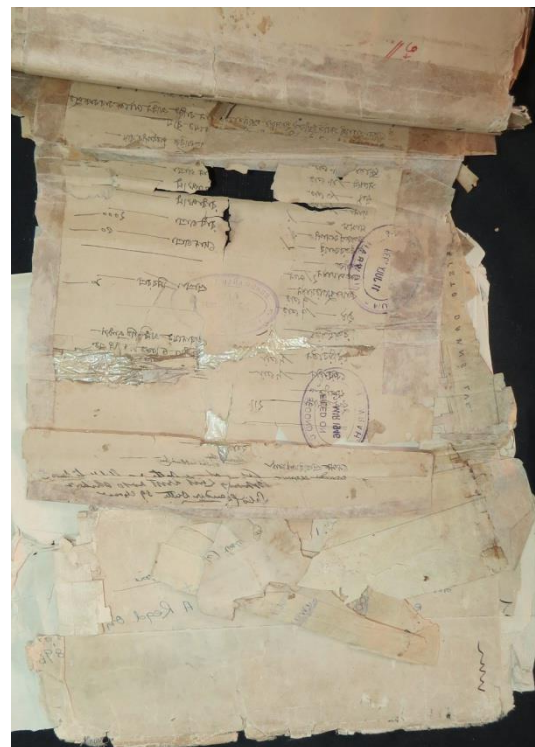
EAP 906:Will of Haridas Daw, 1891 (First Page)



EAP 906:Will of Haridas Daw, 1891 (Last Page)



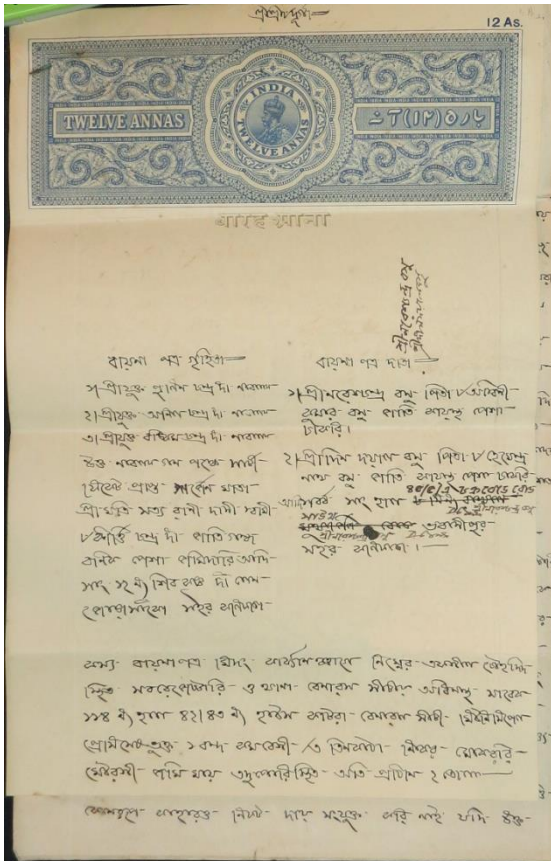
EAP 906: Deed of Arpannama, 1896 (First Page)



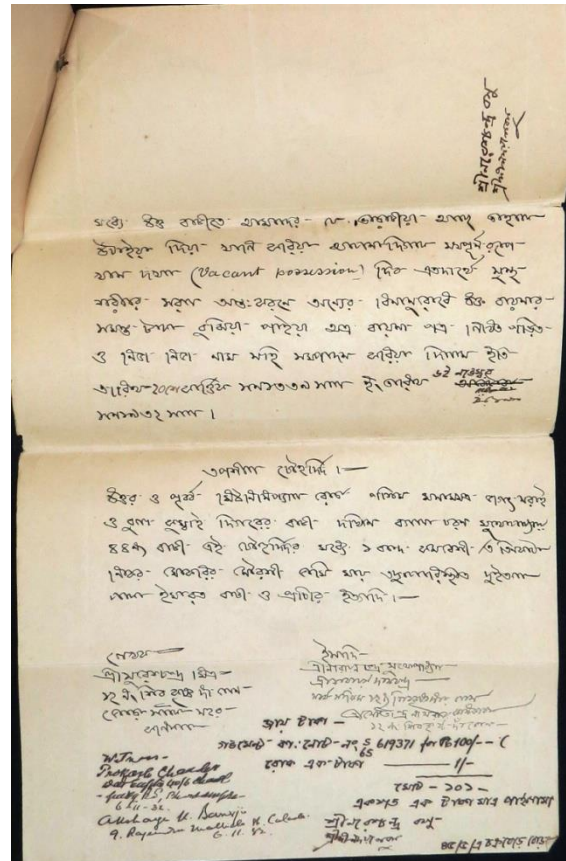
EAP 906: Deed of Arpannama, 1896 (Last Page)

## Report of EAP 906

The descendants of Shib Krishna Daw were actively engaged in coal mining up to 1893. They handed over their coal mines to Andrew Yule & Company on a lease of Rupees one thousand per month. Thereafter the Daw family shifted their attention in other ventures than coal mining. Later Purna Chandra Daw and his successors tried to regain their coal mines but the abolition of *zamindari* in 1950s made that move quite impossible.



EAP 906: Agreement of Sale, 1932 (First Page)



EAP 906: Agreement of Sale, 1932 (Last Page)

The Daw family celebrated Durga Puja with great pomp and show since the time of Shib Krishna Daw. He imported jewellerys from Parris for the Goddess Durga. In 1897, this family built a 'Ras Bari' near Bally, Howrah and used to spend huge money during the festival of *Ras Purnima*. From Kirti Chandra Daw, this family started investing their capital in real estate business. They owned several markets in and around Calcutta. This family is still engaged in business particularly in real estate business.

We have identified some important documents at the house of the Daw family. The oldest one is the will of Haridas Daw, the younger son of Shib Chandra Daw constituted in the year 1891. The second one is a *Deed of Arpannama* of

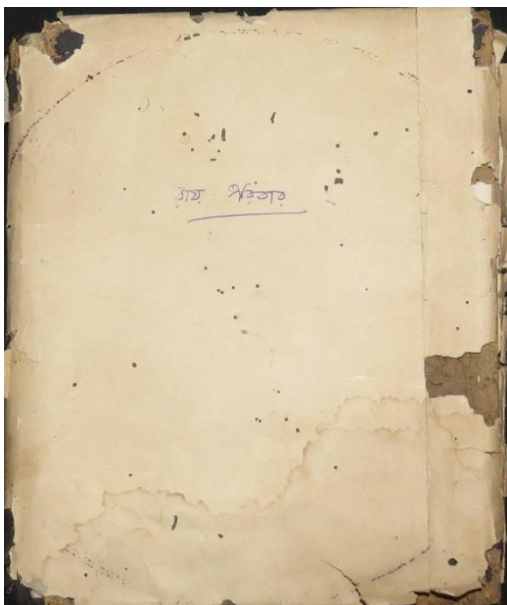


## Report of EAP 906

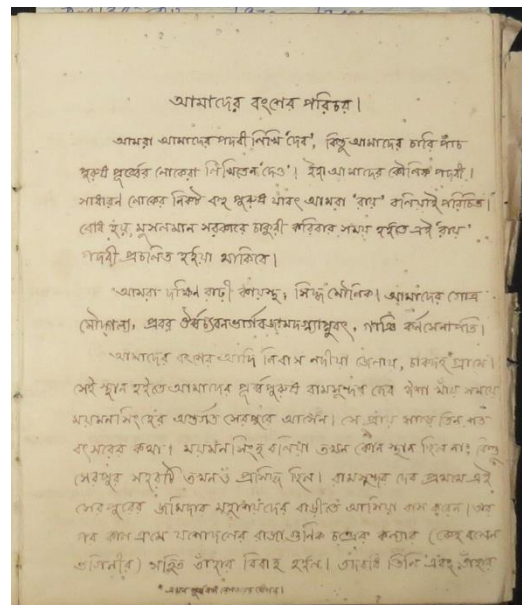
1896 by which a large portion of the immovable family property was dedicated for the purpose of maintenance of the family deity and other religious observations and a trust was formed named *Shib Krishna Debattar Trust* to look after the *debattar* property headed by Purna Chandra Daw. We have also found a Sale Agreement of 6.11.1932 signed between Pulin Chandra Daw, Anil Chandra Daw, Bamkim Chandra Daw and Naresh Chandra Basu and Dindyal Basu to purchase a property in Banaras. We have seen some family photographs and portraits displayed at their residence.

### Upendrakishore Ray (Chowdhury) and Family

The 19th and 20th centuries saw the rise of two remarkable families in Bengal – the Rays and the Tagores. And the Bengalis owe their cultural consciousness to these two legendary families. The Tagore family where Rabindranath Tagore was born remained the powerhouse of social, cultural, literary and reformist activities for three generations. And Satyajit Ray's family too had held for three generations an eminent position in fashioning the cultural and literary traditions of Bengali society.



EAP 906: Ray Paribar (Title Page)



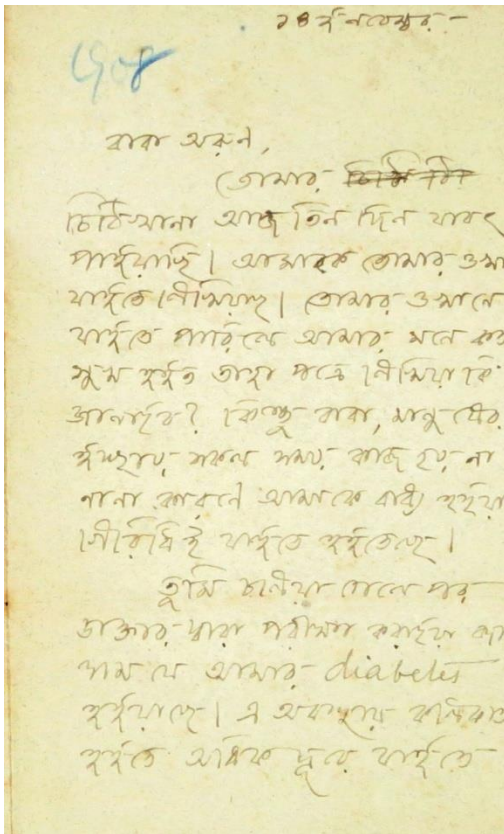
EAP 906: Ray Paribar (First Page)



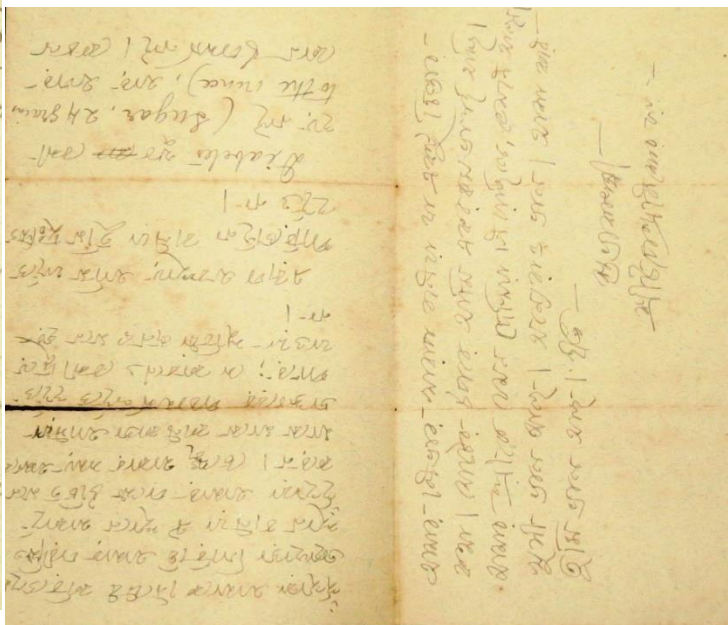


**Report of EAP 906**

The history of the Rays goes back to the mid 16th century when Ramsundar Deb decided to settle in Yasodal (in Bangladesh) as the son-in-law of a local ruler. His subsequent generations acquired the honorific title of Majumdar, which later changed to Ray which too was bestowed on them as a mark of honour. The family branched into two separate branches in the second half of the 18th century. Ramkanta Majumdar was born into the more educated of the two families. Adept in several languages and known for his musical talents, he was a man of courage and great physical strength. Kalinath Ray, Ramkanta's grandson, was a scholar in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. Kamadaranjan, second of Kalinath's five sons, was born in 1863. At the age of five, he was adopted by Harikishore, a relative who was a zamindar in Mymensingh (now in Bangladesh). Kamadaranjan was renamed as Upendrakishore and given the surname 'Raychaudhuri' by Harikishore. It was during the end of nineteenth century, with Upendrakishore, the family emerged in modern Bengal as a distinguished cultural entity, probably next to the formidable tribe of the Tagores. He was like that of Dawraknath Tagore, the fortune maker of the Tagore family. Both of them had genuine love for learning and literature, Brahma Samaj background, scientific bent of mind, receptive mind to adopt new technology of the time and after all a genuine entrepreneurial spirit.



EAP 906: Letter of Upendrakishor Ray (Chowdhury), 1/2



EAP 906: Letter of Upendrakishor Ray (Chowdhury), 2/2

## Report of EAP 906

Upendrakishore was not only talented but also resourceful and possessed great entrepreneurial ability. He pioneered half-tone-block-making, printing and book publishing in Bengal under the name U Ray (later U Ray and Sons) around the turn of the century. He wrote articles for the *Penrose Annual* journal of British printing industry, improved printing process with his own inventions, wrote books for children, illustrated, printed, published and sold them. He wrote songs still sung in the Brahmo Samaj and played the flute and the violin. His elder brother Saradaranjan pioneered the game of cricket; of the other brothers one was a professor, others writers. Kuladaranjan and Pramadaranjan Ray translated Jules Verne and Arthur Conan Doyle to the delight of children and adolescents.



EAP 906: Upendrakishor Ray (Chowdhury)

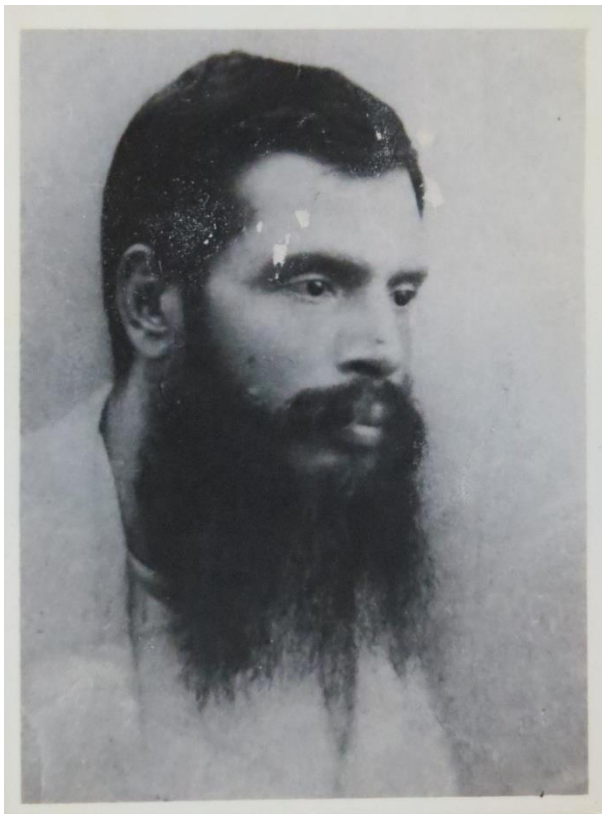


EAP 906: Upendrakishor Ray (Chowdhury)

Upendrakishore's son Sukumar Ray carried the legacy forward. Ray family had a passion for children's literature, but none more than Sukumar Ray. He became the Indian counterpart of Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear. His nonsense verses are still memorised by Bengali children and delight their parents with a very high quality of imaginative verses and inventive illustration. He edited and published a children's magazine named *Sandesh* (meaning both news and sweetmeat) which became enormously popular and was revived later by his son, Satyajit Ray.

## Report of EAP 906

Sukumar Ray died in 1923, when his son, Satyajit was barely two years old. He was brought up by his mother at her brother's house in the midst of a large extended family full of cousins, uncles and aunts. The family was very close to the Tagores. After graduating from Presidency College, Kolkata, Satyajit Ray went to Santiniketan, the university founded by Rabindranath to learn painting at Kala Bhavan under the supervision of great Bengali master painters like Nandalal Bose and Binod Bihari Mukhopadhyay. In 1942, Ray left Santiniketan and joined in a British advertising agency, D J Keymer and Co. , as a commercial artist. He did a good deal of book-jacket designing and illustration work for Signet Press, a pioneering publishing firm which set new standards in Indian book production. Among the books he illustrated was an abridged version of Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay's *Pather Panchali* on which he produced his first feather film that changed his career as a film maker as well as the course of the history of Indian film. Ray was a versatile genius. He not only produced excellent films, but also wrote ceaselessly for the children and youth and illustrated them following the tradition of his father and grandfather.



EAP 906: Upendrakishor Ray (Chowdhury)



EAP 906: Upendrakishor's daughter, Sakuntala Rao with children

Satyajit's son, Sandip Ray is carrying out the tradition set up by his family as a filmmaker and graphic artist, and keeps the family name intact even in the fourth generation.





EAP 906: A Group Photograph of Ray Family

The members of Ray family are very much particular in keeping the family records. They have a huge collection of family photographs, drawings and letters. They have kept a handwritten family history entitled *Ray Poribar (Ray Family)* written in 1915. We have found a copy of *Penrose's Pictorial Annual* (Vol. Xi. 1905-6) edited by William Gamble at their house.

The survey conducted by the research team of EAP 906 clearly shows that there are still a considerable amount of private records available under the custody of the selected business families of Bengal that have to be preserved for the sake of academic research and a better understanding of the business history of Bengal during the colonial period. The private records hitherto explored indicates that the Bengali business families did not gave up their business activities even after the fall of the Union Bank which was considered as the death blow to the Bengali business initiatives. There was certainly a continuity rather than a break in Bengali business activities in the period between the fall of the Union Bank and the Swadeshi era.

## Report of EAP 906

### List of Private Records of Thirteen Business Families of Bengal

Name of the Record(s)	Volume	Condition
<b>I. Deb Family of Shobhabazar (Nabakrishna Deb and Family)</b>		
<b>Legal Document (s)</b>		
Equity Suit: K.C. Ghose Vs. K.S.Ghose, 1926	35 Pages	Fair
Equity Suit: Maha Rajah Sib Kristo Bahadoor Vs. Kristo Chandra Ghosh & Others, 1838	5 Pages	Fair
Will of Maha Rajah Raj Kissen Bahadoor (Bengali Version), 7.8.1823	9 Pages	Fair
Will of Maha Rajah Raj Kissen Bahadoor (English Version), 7.8.1823	5 Pages	Fair
Grant of Tallookdarry to Raja Nabakissen by the East India Company(1778)	4 Pages	Poor
Partition of the <i>Zamindari</i> Estate, 1927	1 Page	Fair
<b>Book(s)</b>		
<i>Bytal Puchisi (The Twenty Five Tales Of Byta), 1834</i>		Fair
<i>A Rapid Sketches on The Life of Raja Radhakanta Deva Bahadur, 1859</i>		Poor
<b>2. Mitra Family of Madanmohantala (Gokul Chandra Mitra and Family)</b>		
<b>Legal Document(s)</b>		
Will of Gakulchandra Mitra, 1.6.1807	8 Pages	Poor
<b>Book(s)</b>		
Purnachandra Dey, <i>Madanmohan-Thakur O Gakulchandra Mitra</i> , 1937		Fair
<b>Map(s)</b>		
Aron Upjojn's <i>Map of Calcutta and its Environs from an accurate survey taken in the years 1792 and 1793</i>	1 Page	Fair
<b>3. Ghosh Family of Pathuriaghat (Ramlochan Ghosh and Family)</b>		
<b>Legal Document(s)</b>		
Patta of 1727	2 Pages	Fair
Partta of 1753	2 Pages	Fair
Patta of 1764	2 Pages	Fair
Patta of 1782 (October 18)	2 Pages	Fair
Patta of 1782 (October 18)	2 Pages	Fair
Patta of 1782 (October 19)	2 Pages	Fair
Patta of 1799	2 Pages	Fair
<b>4. Ray Family of Cossimbazar</b>		
<b><i>Punthis (Manuscripts)</i></b>		
<i>Brata Ratnabali</i>	NA	Damaged
<i>Dayabhaga Tattwa</i>	NA	Damaged



## Report of EAP 906

Name of the Record(s)	Volume	Condition
<i>Dibya Tattwa, Byabhar Tattwa, Manamag Tattwa</i>	NA	Damaged
<i>Ekadashi Tattwa</i>	NA	Damaged
<i>Gautamiya Tattwa</i>	NA	Damaged
<i>Jyotish Tattwa</i>	NA	Damaged
<i>Mahabharata</i>	NA	Damaged
<i>Prakita Lankeswar (Treatise on Prakita Grammer)</i>	NA	Damaged
<i>Prayaschittwa Nirnay, Asauch Nirnay</i>	NA	Damaged
<i>Suddhi Tattwa</i>	NA	Damaged
<i>Timi Tattwa</i>	NA	Damaged
<i>Boidik Home</i>	NA	Damaged
<i>Illustrated Unidentified Punthi</i>	NA	Damaged
<i>Chandi</i>	NA	Damaged
<b>Books printed in the form of Punthi</b>		
<i>Satika Dashakarma Padhyati (Printed at Jyotiprakash Press, 1886)</i>	NA	Damaged
Unidentified Punthi (Printed at Samacharchandrika Press)	NA	
Letters	50	Fair
Yearly Astrological Predictions	70	Damaged
<b>Book(s)</b>		
Collection of Books	1200 titles	Partially damaged

### 5. Dutta Family of Hatkhola

#### Legal Document (s)

Deed of Conveyance(1894)	6 Pages	Fair
Agreement of Sale(1894)	4 Pages	Fair
Building Plan of 78,Nimtola Ghat Street House(1884)	1 page	Poor

### 6. Law Family of Thanthania (Prankissen Law and Family)

#### Letters/ Certificates

Appointment Letter Of Murari Charan Law As Consul Of Calcutta	1 Page	Fair
List of the Sheriffs Of Calcutta , 1775-1953	1 Page	Fair
Salute Letter From Léon Dumarsais Estimé, President Of Haïti	1Page	Fair

#### Photograph (s)/ Painting (s)

Family Photographs	174	Partially damaged
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### 7. Motilal Family of Bowbazar (Biswanath Motilal and Family)

#### Legal Document (s)

Deed of Gift between Ramnarain Muttylall and Sreemutty Bhoobunesury Dabee (7.4.1875)	4 Pages	Partially damaged
Deed of Gift between Dharendra Nath Muttylall and Sm. Subarna Kumari Devi (12.5.1942)	6 Pages	Partially damaged

## Report of EAP 906

Name of the Record(s)	Volume	Condition
Deed of Gift between Dharendra Nath Muttylall and Naranath Motilal (4.9.1942)	6 Pages	Fair
Plan of Premises No. 1/1A, Durga Charan Pithuri Lane	1 Page	Partially damaged
<b>Photograph (s)/ Painting (s)</b>		
Portrait of Biswanath Motilal	1	Fair
Photographs of the family deity Goddess Jagatdhatri	2	Damaged

### 8. Seal Family of Colootola (Mitilal Seal and Family)

<b>Legal Document (s)</b>		
Deed of Dissolution and Assignment with Covenant and Mutual Releases (24.2.1864)	8 Pages	Fair
Land Map and Land Record of Bangladesh Property (1928)	4 Pages	Fair
Jogendranath Mullick Vs Kanto Mohon Mullick (1937)	74 Pages	Fair
A Legal Agreement(Indenture) of 1874	20 Pages	Fair
Will of Joygopaul Sen (28.2.1887)	6 Pages	Fair
Suit IV of 186 ( Joygopaul Sen Vs. H.V. Thomas)	8 Pages	Fair
<b>Book(s)</b>		
Handwritten Family History	151 Pages	Fair
<b>Letter(s)</b>		
Letters, Correspondence And Abstract Of Estimate For Proposed Repairs (1937)	15 Pages	Fair

### 9. Mitra Family of Shyampukur ( Digambar Mitra and Family)

<b>Cash Books</b>		
Cash Books ( 14.04.1937 To 15.08.1952)		Partially damaged
Cash Book (15.4.1939-8.9.1942)		Partially damaged
Cash Book (14.4.1942-14.1.1943)		Partially damaged
Cash Book (10.9.1942-8.7.1945)		Partially damaged
Cash Book (10.7.1945-25.12.1951)		Partially damaged
Cash Book (20.9.1945-22.12.1947)		Partially damaged
Cash Book (14.4.1948-13.4.1950)		Partially damaged
Cash Book (21.11.1945-22.2.1947)		Partially damaged

## Report of EAP 906

Name of the Record(s)	Volume	Condition
Cash Book (23.2.1947-13.4.1948)		Partially damaged
Cash Book (23.6.1944-16.11.1945)		Partially damaged
Cash Book (24.10.1950-15.8.1952)		Partially damaged
Calcutta Corporation Tax Receipts (1951)	4 Pages	Partially damaged
Letters, Correspondence	27 Pages	Partially damaged
<b>Book(s)</b>		
<i>Unrepealed General Acts ( Vol.ii ) , 1876</i>		Fair
<i>Thacker's Directory of The Chief Industries of India, Burma And Ceylon, 1926</i>		Fair
<i>Trilingual Dictionary (Bengali, Sanskrit And English); Undated</i>		Partially damaged
<b>Punthi (Masuscripts)</b>		
Unidentified Manuscript	200 Pages	Partially damaged

### 10. Butto Kristo Paul and Family

#### Advertisements

Advertisement of Products	3 pages	Fair
Letterhead of B.K.Paul & Co.	1	Fair
Sticker Of Medicine	15	Fair

#### Photographs

Family Photographs	7	Fair
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#### Book(s)

<i>The Cyclopedia Of India (1906)</i> (Name and works of B.K.Paul was mentioned In the book )	1	Partially damaged
Almanac Printed from B.K.Paul & Co.Ltd.	2	Fair
Catalogue of Price List of Medicines produced and marketed by B.K.Paul & Co.Ltd	1	Fair

### 11. Daw Family of Jorasanko (Narasimha Chandra Daw & Family)

#### Business Record(s)

Trade License of 1896-1897	1	Fair
Appointment Letter as Agents in Calcutta by the Khan of Kalat (1942)	1	Fair
Appointment Letter as Ammunition Suppliers by the Governor of Assam (1948)	1	Fair
Money Receipt from King Hamilton & Co. 1911	1	Fair

## Report of EAP 906

Name of the Record(s)	Volume	Condition
Receipt of "25 Coils Tarred Safety Fuse" made for N.C Daw & Co.	1	Fair
Catalogue of Arms, Ammunition And Accessories (1939-1940)	24 Pages	Fair
Second Hand Arms Register (16/01/1934 To 31/08/1965)	380 Pages	Partially damaged
<b>Photograph(s)</b>		
Pictures of Narasimha Daw, Dhanakrishna Daw, Nandalal Daw, Asutosh Daw And Nilmadhab Daw	5	Fair
<b>12. Daw Family of Jorasanko (Shibkrishna Daw &amp; Family)</b>		
<b>Legal Document (s)</b>		
Arpan-Nama (1896), a Deed of Debattar Property	22 Pages	Fair
Will of Haridas Daw, son of Shibkrishna Daw (1891)	20 Pages	Fair
Sale Deed of <u>Benaras</u> Property	7 Pages	Fair
Agreement of Sale between Pulin Chandra Daw, Anil Chandra Daw, Bamkim Chandra Daw and Naresh Chandra Basu and Dindayal Basu (1932)	4 Pages	Fair
<b>Photograph (s)/ Painting (s)</b>		
Family Photographs	16	Fair
<b>13. Upendrakishore Ray Chowdhury</b>		
<b>Photograph (s)/ Painting (s)</b>		
Family Photographs	250	Fair
Drawing	1	Fair
<b>Letters</b>		
Letters written by Upendrkishore Ray Chowdhury	13	Partially damaged
<b>Books/ Manuscripts</b>		
<i>Penrose's Pictorial Annual</i> (Vol. Xi. 1905-6) Edited By William Gamble	168 Pages	Partially damaged
Manuscript of <i>Ray Paribar</i> (handwritten family history)	22 Pages	Fair